**In This Issue: Two Prize Contests—$7500.00 In All**

# The Black Cat

ESTABLISHED 1895

**JUNE 1920**

**16 STORIES**

HENRY LEVERAGE
ANDREW SOUTAR
WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE
HOWARD PHILIP RHOADES
ELSINORE ROBINSON CROWELL
G. A. WELLS
LOUIS SCHNEIDER
RAMSEY BENSON
JAMES HENRY THOMPSON
and others

**20 CENTS**

THE BLACK CAT MAGAZINE, INC., *Publishers*
229 WEST 28TH STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

# The Black Cat

Established 1895

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# $7,500.00
## IN CASH PRIZES
## for the Best Novelettes and Short Stories

Many writers whose stories are most in demand by magazine editors to-day started their careers by writing stories for the BLACK CAT and taking part in the old prize story contests that made the BLACK CAT famous. For a quarter of a century the BLACK CAT has been the "open door" to new writers; for a quarter of a century it has devoted itself exclusively to the advancement of short-story writing.

**Among those who have had their first stories published in the BLACK CAT, or have been competitors in previous contests, are :**

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In this issue the publishers announce the conditions of two prize story contests, both now open.

The $2,500 Novelette Contest is something new for the BLACK CAT, as the magazine has never published novelettes. The announcement of this contest (see page 2) marks a change of policy and is another forward step in the magazine's career.

For the conditions of the $5,000 Short Story Contest see pages 124-127. Writers should read the conditions carefully before submitting stories.

The two contests are entirely separate, but the conditions are the same with two exceptions.

The publishers wish particularly to call attention to Article 6 of the Conditions, which provides for payment at regular rates, in addition to the prize awards, for all stories submitted in the contest and found to be acceptable for publication.

# $2,500.00

# IN CASH PRIZES

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| **2nd "** | **750** | **4th "** | **250** |

## CONDITIONS:

The conditions of this contest are the same as those governing the short-story contest (see pages 124-127) with two exceptions: (1) novelettes may range in length from 10,000 to 25,000 words; (2) the competition will close August 31st, 1920.

Manuscripts should be addressed "The Black Cat Magazine, Inc., 229 West 28th Street, New York, N. Y.," and envelopes or wrappers should be plainly marked "Prize Contest." Stories fulfilling the conditions of the contest and found to be acceptable for publication in the BLACK CAT will be paid for at regular rates on acceptance. Publication of these stories will begin as soon as possible, and within sixty days of the closing date of the contest awards will be announced in the BLACK CAT and paid in cash.

The publishers cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity for stories of plot and action. The prize winners will be the plot builders; they will be the writers who succeed in packing into 25,000 words or less dramatic and conflicting incidents and actions occurring in the shortest possible time in the lives of the fewest possible characters—the whole developed to a powerful climax and a reasonable and satisfying conclusion.

Write of present-day life, and avoid the morbid, gruesome, supernatural and unpleasantly tragic.

# READY CASH

*By HENRY LEVERAGE*

FOXHALL, of Foxhall & Brown, criminal lawyers, had just finished a mild Turkish cigarette in the Barristers' Club.

He was a slender man, verging over middle age. His nose arched above a strong upper lip. His jaw was square-set and commanding. His eyes were blue-gray and somewhat protruding. He counted many enemies and a few staunch friends.

The Barristers' had thinned out over the first theatre hour. The billiard-room clicked with the sound of one set between a judge and a politician.

Outside the great windows, the Avenue churned with life. Spring was in the air. Limousines and taxis scurried before the April wind like black sails in a covey.

A boy in lavender breeches, with a pale, white face, glanced into the smoking room, tilted a silver tray and came across the rug toward Foxhall.

"A lady outside, sir," he said.

Foxhall took the card, glanced at the script and rose immediately. His long fingers brushed the cigarette ashes from his dark trousers in reflective motion.

"Tell her I'll be right out. Tell Miss Cosgrove I'll be right—" he started to say, then motioned the boy toward the door.

He glanced at the card for a second time, carefully folded it and pressed it into the fob pocket of his dinner vest.

The man at the door selected his coat and hat, held them out, and beamed good-naturedly as Foxhall hurried over the covered steps which led to a side street.

The soft glow of the twin electrics indicated Miss Cosgrove's landaulette. The starter sprang from his booth and shrilled a whistle. The motor-car came swiftly up.

Foxhall opened the door himself, leaned inside the landaulette and nodded to the girl.

"Get in," she said. "We can't talk here. Something dreadful has happened."

Foxhall entered and sat down as the car started toward the Avenue. It paused at the corner, swung after the traffic policeman had given the signal to go ahead, then glided uptown.

"What has happened?" asked the lawyer.

"Oh!" That was all Miss Cosgrove said over the time of a minute. Foxhall moved his coat from hers, stretched out his patent-leather oxfords and waited.

Now and then he glanced at her with keen scrutiny, as the lights of the Avenue illuminated the interior of the landaulette. He had known her for a period of six or seven years. Her father was one of his old clients. Hadden Cosgrove was a name to conjure with in a certain small circle of select bankers.

Foxhall recognized the Plaza and the corner of the Park with a start. He twisted sideways and laid his hand upon the girl's quivering shoulder. A small lace handkerchief was constantly daubing toward her eyes. The eyes were violet-gray and shimmering with tears.

"What happened?" he repeated. "Anything, to your father?"

"Yes!" The handkerchief was clutched into a tiny ball. "Father has disappeared.

The people at the bank say he took all the money."

"Oh!" said Foxhall. "That's ridiculous! He never did that!"

'They—they say he did. I haven't seen him since noon. He went to the bank. You know it was robbed yesterday!"

"I didn't know that."

"It was. Somebody took fifty-nine thousand dollars—all the ready cash from the vault. Now—now, they say father took it."

Foxhall's face grew serious. His mind went back over the time of his acquaintance with Hadden Cosgrove. There were no details that stood out as suspicious. The banker and vice-president of the Chambers Trust Company was a model financier of the safer order. He did not speculate, to Foxhall's knowledge. He had few friends, and they were staunch ones. His daughter was rated high in the social circles of the city.

"Come now," he said. "You mustn't give way to hysterics. Suppose we go to —my place and talk it over. Unless," he added, "you want to go home or to a quiet room in a restaurant."

"Your place will do. I must tell you everything. Would it be proper?"

"To tell me everything?"

"No—to go to your place." She turned her head towards his and stared wide-eyed up into his face. "People won't talk, will they?"

Foxhall smiled reassuringly. "Hardly!" he said. "There's an old china teapot and there's a big roaring fire in the den, and there's Andrew, who is major-domo of the establishment. It isn't far —right through the Park and out to the Drive. I must have all the facts of the robbery before I tell you if I can help you. What have you done to find your father?"

"Everything! This is the first night in three years he hasn't come home or telephoned. That is what worried me when they said he took the money."

Foxhall consulted a flat watch by aid of a corner arc-light. "Nine, now," he said. "Will you tell your man to take us to number 1144 Riverside Drive? My place," he added as he replaced the watch in his vest.

The girl changed her handkerchief from her right hand to her left, and lifted up the speaking-tube. She gave the address with a sudden flutter of strength in her voice. Dropping the tube, as the car turned, she folded the handkerchief in her lap, pressed this into a small purse and leaned back. Her eyes closed. Her mouth tightened with tiny wrinkles dropping from each corner.

"Father," she said as Foxhall was silent, "father never kept a single secret from me. He was more than a father—he was a chum. We were always together. And now—and now, Mr. Foxhall—they say the most awful things. I can't believe them. Father never stole a single penny—from anybody."

"He needs no character witnesses," said Foxhall professionally. "I think, although it is natural for a daughter to stick by her father, that in your case your judgment is sound. I would say the same thing of him. A mistake has been made or an accident has happened. We can probably settle it all over the telephone as soon as we get in my den. I know Rufus Hoyt well. He's president of the Chambers Trust Company. He wouldn't allow such a charge to be made against your father."

The girl bent and daubed her eyes with clinched knuckles. "It was he who made the charge," she sobbed wildly. "He has notified the police. They are at the house —three detectives."

"Rufus Hoyt made that charge? Your father's friend?"

"Yes," she answered plaintively. "Yes, he did! All the directors say that father is guilty—every one of them!"

Foxhall grew serious. The directors and the president of the Chambers Trust Company were extremely cautious men.

"I'm sorry for that." he said, then relapsed into silence.

The landaulette reached number 1144 Riverside Drive and came to a stop with a soft glide to the curb. Foxhall stepped out on the running-board and then to the pavement. He assisted Miss Cosgrove to alight.

"I think you had better tell your man to wait right here," he said. "Who knows, we may need him."

The girl leaned over the front seat. She turned, after giving the chauffeur directions to wait. Her eyes lifted and widened toward the apartment. She raised her hand and held it out.

"It's going to rain," she said as she followed Foxhall into the hallway.

A minute later she had seated herself before the fireplace which an old butler had stirred into glowing life. Foxhall stood by her side with his elbow on the mantle. The great room was illuminated by only the center globe of an indirect cluster on the ceiling. The details of this room were merged into the general richness of time and rare mahogany. Tapestries, portières, plaques, silken rugs, cases of ivory and jade were interpolated with shelves of first editions and morocco-covered law books.

Foxhall had not insisted that the girl should take off her hat and coat. She sat staring into the fire. Her eyes reflected its glow. The shadows across her face were heightened by new lines born that day.

"Now tell me everything," he said. "Don't overlook a single trifle. We have a telephone here and a world of people who will work for us. We must locate your father—before the police do."

"He isn't guilty."

"No—we'll start with that supposition. Tell me exactly what happened, Miss Cosgrove."

The girl began in a low, strained voice:

"Father came home for lunch at noon yesterday. He was terribly worried. He couldn't talk coherently at first. Then he told me that somebody had opened the big vault in the bank during the night and stolen all of the ready cash. Whoever it was, took fifty-nine thousand dollars—all in bills."

"Were there any marks of tools or dynamite used?"

"Father said that there was none at all. The big door and the inside door had both been opened without force."

"Who had the combination besides your father?"

"Mr. Rufus Hoyt."

"No one else?"

"No! Father said no one else had it."

Foxhall removed his elbow from the mantlepiece and stepped to a table. He picked out a cigarette from a red box, lighted it and returned to the girl's side.

"Do you mind if I smoke?" he asked.

"No, please do."

"Smoking," he said, "smoothes over lots of things. I must get one point straight. If your father and Mr. Hoyt had the combination to the two doors of the vault, and no one else had the combination, and supposing the money was in the vault when it was locked up and wasn't in when it was unlocked, which I suppose is the case, the matter narrows itself down to—

The girl glanced up swiftly.

"Neither father or Mr. Hoyt would steal that money," she said staunchly. "I know father wouldn't. He didn't need it. I have ten or twelve thousand dollars in bonds belonging to him in my vault. Mr. Hoyt is worth six or seven hundred thousand dollars. He owns property in Westchester."

"Who was present when the vault was opened yesterday morning?"

"Mr. Hoyt and father both opened it. They went inside the vault—it's a big one—and the cash was gone. Three tin boxes were upside-down on the floor of the vault."

"Your father told you this yesterday noon."

"Yes."

"What did he say that night?"

"The same, only that safe experts had been called. They declared it was an inside job, whatever that means."

"They meant someone in the bank, Miss Cosgrove."

"But father didn't do it!"

Foxhall liked that staunch, strained voice. It spoke of loyalty to the very end.

"We'll suppose he didn't," he said. "He didn't and Mr. Hoyt didn't. When was it you learned of your father's disappearance?"

The girl's lips twisted pensively.

"This evening. I waited and waited. Then the detectives came. They were the district attorney's men. They wanted to see father. They went over all of his papers. It seems, Mr. Foxhall, that father stayed around the bank all day straightening out matters. He was seen at four o'clock in the back of the building. Then, just before the bank closed, Mr. Hoyt looked for father and he was gone. His hat and coat were gone. A little while later Mr. Sievert, the assistant cashier, telephoned in that he had seen father hurrying away from the bank and that he was following him. The detectives told me that Mr. Hoyt said that."

"Who is this Sievert?"

"Just a clerk. I met him once or twice. What right has he to follow my father?"

"You've given me all the facts?" asked Foxhall, fearing to cross-question her too much.

"All," she sobbed.

"We'll have some tea," he said. "You must compose yourself. Luckily I'm gifted or cursed with some imagination. Most criminal lawyers have none. They're mathematicians and cold-as-ice. The case at present is all against your father. He should not have fled. That, taking in consideration the opening of the vault from a knowledge of the combination, is what the district attorney is banking on. We'll see if his suspicions are tentative ones."

Foxhall threw off some of his lethargy and strode rapidly toward the wall near the door. To the servant who answered his bell, he ordered tea and cakes for two. The old major-domo glanced puzzledly toward the girl's form before the fireplace. Her sobbing could be heard across the room. There was a catching note in her throat which reached both men's hearts.

"Tea'll be here, soon," said Foxhall, leaning over his center table and lifting a silver-plated telephone. "Now we'll move heaven and earth, and incidentally, a few operatives, toward finding your father. How did he look, Miss Cosgrove, when last you saw him? What kind of hat, coat, necktie and suit did he wear? You know he might have been detained by force." Foxhall added this statement despite his own fears.

"His hat?" said the girl, turning. "His hat was gray. His coat was also gray. His suit was dark blue. I don't remember his necktie."

Foxhall lifted the receiver from the hook, then pressed it down again.

"Let's see," he said. "Your father is about fifty years old, slender, no mustache or beard, brown eyes and—and anything else?"

"He looks younger than fifty," said the girl, "though he's almost fifty-three. Some of his friends have said—"

"Just a moment, please," Foxhall said as he heard Central's voice. "We'll get the Drew people in this. They've worked for me before."

The lawyer's orders over the wire, after he had secured the manager of the private agency, were terse and all to the point. "Find Hadden Cosgrove, yes *the* Hadden Cosgrove, if he is on earth. Get him to me," Foxhall insisted. "Don't let the district attorney or the detective department know what you are doing. I want Mr. Cosgrove brought here—when he is found."

Foxhall watched the girl as he waited with the receiver held to his ear. Her

body was twisted in the chair before the fireplace. Her strained face was turned toward him.

"Yes," Foxhall continued speaking into the transmitter. "Yes, try the steamship piers, railway stations, his clubs—everything. He had on a gray coat and hat, Blue suit. You know about how he looked. If he has left the town, there should be a trace at the stations or piers. Put ten men out on this, Triggy."

"Triggy" Drew was the bright star of Drew's Agency. Foxhall had employed him before. He explained this as he hung up the receiver and crossed the floor to Miss Cosgrove's side.

"Drew," he said cheerfully, "will find your father if anybody can. He has cleared up one or two matters for me in a surprisingly short space of time. There was the Bishop affair where I had more detectives, or operatives, on the case than the district attorney. Criminal practice of the present day has called for counter-detective work. The prosecutor and the police all work one way, which isn't exactly fair."

"Do you think father has left the city?"

"He may have. I don't understand Mr. Hoyt's attitude in letting that old cashier—Sievert—follow your father. Where is Sievert now?"

Foxhall glanced at the phone with a sudden inspiration.

"I think he telephoned Mr. Hoyt this afternoon, soon after father left the bank, that he was close up with father. What right did he have to do that?"

The lawyer turned his eyes away from the phone and glanced at the girl.

"I was going to tell Drew about Sievert," he said thoughtfully. "I guess it isn't important. The clerk is acting with Hoyt. It may be a piece of impudence on his part. It's over-extended concern, whatever it is!"

The girl flashed a warm glow of understanding. "That's what I think," she said. "The idea of them suspecting father. Why, he never harmed anybody or never failed to pay a debt. I know of his charities. I know he didn't need money. What can be the answer?"

Foxhall heard the butler at the door. He laid his finger across his lips for silence and took the tea which was on a lacquer tray. He poured out two cups and set them on the corner of the table.

"Try some of this," he said, "while we go over a thought which has occurred to me. Do you know the maker's name of the safe in your father's bank? Perhaps we can get one of their experts over here right away."

The girl pressed her hair from her temples, lifted a rice-cake and held it out as she said:

"The maker's name of the safe? Yes! The detectives who were at the house were talking about it. They said it was burglar-proof. It was Three-Bolt, or something that sounded like that."

Foxhall drew out a slide from under the table and lifted a telephone book. He went down the list of "T's" with a polished finger nail.

"Treebold!" he exclaimed, staring at the number. "It's a Treebold! They're on Broadway near Pine Street. Their manager is a Mr. Hisson. We'll get him over here right away. Perhaps he was at the bank."

"Would his testimony help father?"

"We can only wait and hope. Hisson's number is Murray Park, 4739." Foxhall closed the book, lifted the receiver and spoke to Central. He connected with a Mr. Hisson after a minute's wait.

He hung up the receiver and lifted a cup of tea. Between sips he said:

"He's coming over. He doesn't live far from here. He wasn't at the bank, but one of his men was. He has that man's report. He's bringing it."

"I do hope it clears, father."

Foxhall eyed the bottom of the cup. "So do I," he said as he set the cup down and glanced at his watch. "Ten-fifteen," he added. "Will they expect you at home, Miss Cosgrove?"

"I told my aunt I'd be late. She's sitting up, though. We could call her and ask if she has heard anything about father."

"Wait till the safe man comes. I think we shall learn something from him."

The major-domo appeared after a silver bell had sounded in a hallway.

"Mr. Hisson," he announced. "Shall I show 'im in? 'E says you were expectin 'im, sir."

Hisson proved to be a dumpling sort of man with a moon-like face. He advanced through the portières hesitatingly. He took the chair offered, with an apologetic manner. He bowed, without rising as Foxhall introduced Miss Cosgrove.

"About the safe in the Chambers Trust Company?" asked the lawyer with a keen dart across the table. "Miss Cosgrove is interested because an overzealous district attorney has accused her father of robbing it. Could you tell us anything in order to clear her father? Was it possible for anybody else than Mr. Cosgrove or Mr. Hoyt to open it—last night? It has been intimated that they are the only two who had the combination."

Hisson dived into his pocket with a pudgy hand and drew out a sheet of folded paper. He eyed this paper, then glanced up at Foxhall.

"No, it wasn't possible," he said. "The safe was opened by one of those two men. Unless they gave the combination to someone else, who opened it."

"Certain of that, Mr. Hisson?" snapped Foxhall swinging around the table. "Remember, this is an importaint point."

Hisson blinked his eyes but held his ground.

"I don't have to say anything at all," he said. "I have seen the district attorney and Mr. Hoyt. We went over the entire matter. Laying aside professional pride in our safes, I'll say they can be opened by drilling in a certain spot. 'Soft spot,' we call it. The safe or vault in the Chambers Trust Company was not drilled. It was opened, if opened at all last night, by some man who had the combination to both inner and outer door. My understanding is that only Mr. Hoyt and Mr. Cosgrove were entrusted with the combinations. Mr. Hoyt is above suspicion. Mr. Cosgrove is suspected. I fear that he—is wanted."

The agent for the safe company blinked his eyes toward the girl at the fireplace. He refolded the paper and pressed it into his pocket. He rose and straddled his chair.

Foxhall stepped between the girl and the agent. "One question," he said firmly. "It's to your interest to prove that the safe was opened with the combinations, is it not?"

"Certainly. But then that particular vault could not have been opened any other way. It's a big safe, modern, with strong walls of case-hardened steel and a concrete filler. There was no way into it except through the doors. The watchman stated to my man that Mr. Cosgrove was in the building at six o' clock last evening. He had plenty of time to open the safe. He had plenty of opportunity to remove the money. I tell you right now, Mr. Foxhall, things look mighty black for him."

Foxhall motioned toward the door. "I'll see you out,'" he said coldly. "I'm sorry you can't be of any help to us," he added as the butler brought Mr. Hisson's hat and coat.

The lawyer returned to the room and stepped over to the fireplace. Miss Cosgrove was staring dry-eyed at the embers. She turned with a slight start. Her eyes dimmed with moisture.

"We're not beat yet!" Foxhall exclaimed. "We're only at the beginning. I've seen worse cases than this, cleared to everybody's satisfaction including the suspect. That Hisson was a cool proposition."

"He's working for Mr. Hoyt."

"Undoubtedly! Well, we're not!

Let's see, we haven't learned a single thing that will help us, and yet I'm banking on a daughter's intuition. A woman sometimes knows what wise men never find out."

She flashed a glance of gratitude. Foxhall interested her. He was imaginative, as he had said. She sensed this in his sympathy.

"Summing up," he said suddenly, "we've found that your father is missing, that the safe couldn't have been opened by anyone save your father and Hoyt, that the money was really taken—and the district attorney will probably ask for an indictment by to-morrow noon. It's all for the plaintiff so far and nothing scored for the defendant. Well—"

"Buuurrr! Buuurrr! Buuurrr!"

Foxhall turned and reached for the phone. He pressed the receiver to his ear.

"Yes," he said. "Yes, this is Foxhall. Who? Who? Drew? Hello, Mr. Drew. What's that? What? Repeat that. Yes. Go on! Are you sure? He went— Repeat that, I can't hear you."

The girl rose from her chair and stepped to the lawyer's side.

"What does he say?" she asked.

Foxhall held his finger to his lips in a motion to be silent.

"Yes, I hear you," he said. "Go on. Cosgrove, what? Yes. He's where? Are you sure? Yes! Yes! Do that, immediately. Bring him here! What time will it be?" Foxhall drew his watch from his pocket and held it out. He listened intently.

"All right," he said finally. "Keep me posted, Triggy. Good-by!"

The girl laid her hand on the lawyer's arm. "What happened?" she asked. "What—what happened to father?"

Foxhall replaced the receiver on the hook and pressed his watch into his pocket. His eyes flashed as he turned suddenly. "The case gets worse," he said. "Come, sit down by the fire and I'll tell you what Drew said. He's found out that your father took a boat for Fall River at six o' clock this afternoon. I don't think he can be wrong."

"I don't believe it!"

Foxhall held out a chair upon which the girl sat with her hands pressed to her cheeks. "I don't believe that father went to Fall River without telling me!" she exclaimed.

"Drew is sure it is your father. He had seven or eight operatives cover the piers and the railroad stations. They didn't have much to go on save that your father wore a gray hat and overcoat. The booking clerk at the steamship line slightly remembered a man answering your father's description, who was in a great hurry. The boat, Portland, is equipped with a wireless. Inquiry through this medium, made by Drew, shows that there is a Mr. Samuel Grove assigned to one of the midship cabins.

"The purser states that Mr. Samuel Grove is an eldery man with a blue suit, gray overcoat and gray hat. That fits your father."

"And what have you told Drew to do?"

"He suggested that he call up his operatives along the Connecticut coast, charter a tug and board the Portland before it gets to Fall River. That will head the district attorney off, and bring your father here."

"But Mr. Samuel Grove may not be my father."

Foxhall shook his head. "Cosgrove and Samuel Grove are very close—particularly taken in connection with gray coat, gray hat, middle age and a blue suit."

"Then you think my father would stoop so low as to change his name?"

"We can't be sure of anything. Perhaps the suspicion directed at him by Hoyt and the others has upset his mind. Perhaps everything will be cleared when Drew brings him here. They have gone too far now to stop. The tug will be chartered. Your father should be here by one or two o' clock."

The girl rose from the chair and went to the front window. She pressed a curtain aside and stood in the casement. The light from the single overhead bulb brought out the strained details of her features. Foxhall, by the fireplace, stared at her. He shook his head. It was evident that she had suffered much since the disappearance of her father. He believed that she would have more to face before two o'clock. No case, in his memory, looked blacker against a man. Only a motive for taking the money was wanting.

"It's still raining," she said as she turned and dropped the curtain. "To think that poor father is out on a night like this."

Foxhall waited until she had seated herself in front of the fireplace. Then he said encouragingly:

"Suppose I phone your house—your aunt, and tell her that you are here. It's barely possible she may have received word from your father."

"You get the number," she said, "and I'll talk to her. She'll begin to worry from now on. I told her I was just going for a ride."

Foxhall called up Central, glanced at the girl, heard her say "Vanalstein 5731," and secured this number after a wait. The aunt's voice sounded strained and far away. She spoke indignantly to Foxhall. He hung up the receiver and arched his brow as he turned toward Miss Cosgrove.

"I got it," he said with candor. "First she blamed me for keeping you away, and then she told me that two Central Office detectives are occupying your father's smoking den. They're waiting for him to return."

"What right have they?"

"Hardly any, except the district attorney's permission. Hoyt must be pressing the charge."

She stared at the fireplace. Suddenly she turned. "Couldn't we talk to Mr. Hoyt over the telephone and have him come over here? I'm sure that I could convince him of father's innocence."

"No, I don't believe you could. Everything points to your father's guilt. It is the lack of motive for taking the money that buoys me up. Without that, Miss Cosgrove, I don't know what I would do." He was frankly at the end of his resources.

"You see," he added after glancing at his watch, "I'm called upon to defend a client who, from all appearances, fled the city the day after a robbery. He was one of two men who could have opened the safe without trace. He was in the bank at six o' clock—the evening before the robbery. This, in itself, was unusual. I'm with you to the end of this thing, Miss Cosgrove. I'll defend your father before all the courts in the land. But one thing—I want to talk to him before the detectives do. I want his side of the matter. Drew or his operatives will bring him here. They will not ask him many questions. He must tell us what happened, and then you and I shall decide what to do."

"Suppose he says he isn't guilty."

"Then he must tell us the reason for not telephoning you that he was going on that Fall River boat—his reason for leaving under a cloud. He was in the bank all the day when the examination was being made. He must have known he would be suspected if he left the city."

"What time is it?" she asked.

"It's after twelve, now. Shall I call up Drew."

"Yes, do!"

"He will probably be in his office. He works that way—right at the end of a telephone wire. His agency has ramifications all over the country."

Foxhall whispered a number into the phone and waited. He stiffened his wrist as the diaphragm clicked an answer.

"Hello, Mr. Drew," he said. "What have you learned in the Fall River matter?"

The lawyer's face clouded, then cleared as he listened. He attempted to speak once or twice but was held silent by the torrent of information which came over the wire to him. He said finally:

"All right! Right here! Yes—number 1144 Riverside! First apartment. We'll be waiting for him. Yes! Good-by!"

He hung up the receiver and lifted a cigarette from the red box on the table before he declared:

"Your father refused to say a word when Drew's men boarded the boat off New Haven. He refused to give his correct name or anything. The money was found on him. Fifty-odd thousand in bills! The detectives are bringing him back in a fast limousine. Drew says he should be here by three o' clock. It's no doubt that he's your father."

The girl lifted her hands and removed her hat. She turned as Foxhall advanced to take her coat. There was a latent loyalty in her voice as she said staunchly:

"My father wouldn't steal. I know it! I'm sure of it. Don't you know that a daughter knows her own father, Mr. Foxhall?"

The lawyer laid the coat across the back of a chair. "He's coming to friends, anyway," he said. "That's something, after all. It's much better than having the district attorney's men catch him. It will make a big difference in the trial—if there is one."

The girl stared at the lawyer. "Trial," she said, "Oh, I hope not. It doesn't seem possible that a thing like that would happen. Father is one of the best known bankers in this city."

"We will let him tell us his story. There may be extenuating circumstances. We mustn't make the mistake of jumping at conclusions before the details are all in."

Foxhall dragged out his watch and glared at it. He paced the floor, with his hands clasped behind him. Now and then he came close to the girl by the fireside. Each time he passed her she ceased sobbing and attempted to hide her emotion.

"One o'clock," he said finally. "I hope your aunt won't be worried about you?"

"She will be worried! So will those two detectives, I guess. I don't care, Mr. Foxhall, if they stay there until daylight. You must promise me that if father wishes to leave here without anybody going with him—he can. Promise me that?"

Foxhall lifted out his watch and stared at it for the tenth time that night. "Aiding and abetting," he laughed to hold back her fears. "Well, we'll see. I want a good talk with him. So do you."

She turned away from the fire. Her eyes lifted to the window nearest the Drive. She listened intently. Her head shook as she twisted in the chair and held her hands out to the fire.

It was ten minutes after three o' clock when a silver bell rang in the hallway of the apartment. The sleepy-eyed major-domo parted the curtains and blinked toward Foxhall and the girl who were standing together by the table.

"There's three men out 'ere to see you, sir. Three gentlemen, sir."

"Show them in!"

The lawyer snapped the words. He took one step in front of the girl. The curtains parted after voices were heard in the hall. A man stepped in followed by a second and then a third. The second man had a gray hat pulled down over his eyes. His coat was gray. His suit was of blue serge.

Foxhall stared at this man in undisguised amazement. He recognized the other two as Drew's operatives.

"Who is this?" he asked sharply.

"The fellow we were sent after. We found the money on him. He hasn't said a word to us. Denies everything!" said the detectives.

The girl clasped Foxhall's sleeve.

"That isn't father!" she exclaimed. "That's Sievert!"

"Sievert—the assistant cashier?"

"Yes! Yes! Now, where is father?"

"Ah!" drawled Foxhall like a hound on a scent. "The case has rounded. And this fellow has the money?" This question was to the leader of the two operatives.

"Sure! Ain't he Cosgrove?"

"His daughter ought to know," said the lawyer advancing across the room. "Where's Mr. Cosgrove, Sievert?" he added, lifting the gray hat and staring at the assistant cashier.

Something in the man's eyes—a glint of defiance—caused Foxhall to step back and say:

"Better cuff him, boys. Search him and cuff him. I see what happened. He stole Mr. Cosgrove's hat and coat this afternoon and telephoned back to the bank that he was on the vice-president's trail. That was a throw-off in order that he could make a get-a-way."

"But where is father?" asked the girl. "Has he killed him?"

Foxhall narrowed his eyes and watched the collection of coins and papers the detectives were removing from Sievert's clothes.

They added bundles of bank notes which they had taken care of since the arrest on the Fall River boat.

The lawyer went over the papers. He found nothing in them that related to the missing banker. He glared at Sievert. The man's silence was unusual.

The girl touched Foxhall on the arm. Her voice carried to the heart of the matter. "If father was in the bank this afternoon and this man went away with his coat and hat, then Mr. Foxhall, he may still be in the bank. Have you any proof that he ever left the Chambers Trust Company?"

Foxhall turned and snatched up the telephone. "You're right!" he exclaimed. "We must get Hoyt to the bank, right away. We'll all go over there. I think the case ends where it began."

The lawyer called up Central, and after a short wait was in communication with Mr. Hoyt's butler who sleepily promised to wake the banker and tell him that Sievert was in custody of two private detectives. Foxhall added as a final stroke, that the assistant cashier had all the money which had been stolen from the bank.

He hung up the receiver and helped Miss Cosgrove on with her coat. One of the detectives dragged out a pair of handcuffs and snapped them upon Sievert's wrists.

"Might as well take no chances," he said grimly. "This is the quietest lad I ever pinched. He's got something on his mind—he has!"

Foxhall led the way out through the curtains and to the waiting autos. The big limousine which had come through the mud from New Haven, started off toward the south and the Chambers Trust Company. The lawyer assisted Miss Cosgrove into her laundalette. They leaned back on the cushions as the chauffeur clicked through first, second and third speed.

"Father may be dead," said the girl suddenly. "How else are we going to explain his disappearance?"

"He's innocent, that's sure," Foxhall declared. "Sievert stole the money, waited until last evening, telephoned that he was on your father's trail, and decamped. He knows what became of your father, but he won't talk. Perhaps he will, if Hoyt questions him."

"How did Sievert get into the safe? He must have had the combination in order to steal the money?"

Foxhall darted a quick glance at the girl. "I believe," he began, then remained silent. She watched the lawyer as if searching for a clue in his actions. His face was keen and thoughtful. His hands gripped the cushion.

The bank was reached finally. Foxhall

stood on the running-board and stared at its closed doors. The detectives and Sievert had already alighted. They stood in a huddled group under a portico. A thin morning rain was falling.

"If Hoyt doesn't come," said Foxhall, "we can't get into the bank. I don't believe the watchman will admit us. There he is."

A face pressed against the window beside the portico. Sleepy eyes stared suspiciously toward the two detectives and their charge. The leader of these tried a great knob. He shouted something. He rattled the knob. The face disappeared as a curtain was dropped.

"Gone for the police alarm!" said Foxhall. "Too bad we woke him up."

The sharp exhaust of a taxi sounded A cab wheeled around a corner and skidded across the slippery cobbles. Hoyt, half-dressed and with his eyes glued upon Sievert, burst from the taxi's interior and charge over the pavement.

"You thief!" he accused. "So, you had the money. Where is it? Where is it? Where is Cosgrove?"

"Let's go inside the bank," suggested Foxhall as Hoyt glared from face to face. "This is Miss Corgrove," he added. "She is anxious about her father, whom you suspected."

Hoyt crimsoned and reached for the knob of the great door. He jabbed at a concealed button. The watchman appeared. He was wide-awake and armed with an old rifle which he held by the muzzle.

The door opened, after a wait and a rattle of many chains and keys. Hoyt charge up the steps and into the warm interior of the bank. He wheeled upon Sievert and grasped the lapels of his coat.

"Where's the money?" he demanded. "How did you get it? Where is Cosgrove? What right had you to tell me you were following him? You're fired—discharged!"

"I guess he's worse than that," said one of the detectives. "We got the money. Found it all, on him. Fifty-nine thousand dollars in big bills."

Foxhall watched Sievert. The assistant cashier had weakened under the onslaught of Hoyt. The lawyer saw his chance, and pressed it:

"Come out with the truth, Sievert," he said. "You're caught red-handed! Where is Mr. Cosgrove? His daughter demands to know. If he is dead—tell us. If he is alive—"

Sievert twisted away from Hoyt's grasp and turned toward the high, brass grill-work which enclosed the cashier's and paying teller's cages. He jerked his chin toward the doors of the huge vault.

"Her father is in there," he said in a whisper. "He was in there when I saw him last. He's bound and tied with tape. He's on the top shelf behind the ledgers. I didn't mean to kill him. He isn't dead!"

Hoyt rushed for a side door and darted through the cages. He bent his head and twisted the bright dial of the safe. He worked swiftly.

Foxhall followed the girl through the cage and to the back of the bank. The detectives stood between the door and Sievert. The watchman, still holding the rifle by the muzzle, eyed the group with suspicion.

The outer door of the vault swung as Hoyt pulled down the lever. He stepped inside and started twisting the combination-knob on the inner dial. Now and then he listened with his head bent sideways. The girl grasped Foxhall's arm as the last number was obtained. The door swung open. Hoyt reached and snapped on a side switch. He peered into the brightly-lighted vault. He tiptoed toward the back shelves where the ledgers showed.

A low moan greeted this action. The banker glanced to one side where other shelves were. Dust fell from one. He pulled down the books and peered over the edge of the top shelf.

"Here he is!" he cried. "Help me get him down. Sievert will pay for this!"

It was five minutes later when Cosgrove told a coherent story. He rubbed his wrists and gulped eagerly of the water his daughter brought to him. He pointed his finger at Sievert.

"That damn thief!" he said between gulps. "I suspected him and followed him into the vault this afternoon—yesterday afternoon. I saw him take a screwdriver from behind a ledger. He was going to hide it in a better place. It flashed over me how the bank had been robbed. It was the only way the two doors could he opened without the combination. We had words and the last thing I know he had struck me over the head with the screwdriver. I came to, during the night. I was bound and gagged and suffocating. Then I fainted, I guess. I seemed to have no control over my limbs. I could not move from the shelf."

The banker paused and reached for his daughter's hand. He turned toward Foxhall.

"How about the money?" he asked. "The money I was suspected of taking?"

"Sievert had it all," said the lawyer tersely. "All! There's one thing that isn't explained. I know that Mr. Hoyt and everybody here is curious to learn how Sievert robbed the vault after you and Mr. Hoyt locked up the money. You say he was hiding a screwdriver? How could he open a vault like this with a——?"

"He's a damn scoundrel!" exclaimed Cosgrove. "A mighty clever one! Yesterday—day before yesterday—between the time of closing the bank and locking the vault, he secreted himself on the same shelf where he laid me. Mr. Hoyt and I placed the money inside and bolted the two doors. Sometime during the night, Sievert came down from the shelf, unscrewd the back-plate to the combination of the inner door and set the tumblers with his fingers. It was easy to open it from the inside. He replaced the plate and did the same thing to the outer door. He stepped through, closed the door and got out of the bank!"

Cosgrove paused and eyed the circle about him. "Yesterday," he continued, "he came on duty at the regular hour in order to divert suspicion. He was afraid to flee with the money. When I found him in the vault with the screwdriver he saw that I had guessed that the combinations had been worked from the inside."

Foxhall turned toward Sievert. "Is that how it happened?" he asked.

"Oh, I'm guilty," said the assistant cashier. "You'll find my books all doctored up. I'm glad, now, I didn't get away with all the money. It would have gone just that much harder with me when I got caught!"

Foxhall turned away from the assistant cashier and said to Rufus Hoyt:

"I'm still acting for Mr. Cosgrove. I demand an apology from you, sir."

"Granted," said the banker advancing toward his old friend.

"Just a moment!" Foxhall's voice was terse. "I refuse to let you two men shake hands to-night. I'm going to give Mr. Cosgrove until to-morrow to think over what you have done. If he comes down to the bank—all right! If he doesn't—after thinking over your action in suspecting him—you two can part."

"By the way," said the lawyer in final tones. "When you put that money in the vault, Mr. Hoyt, look and see if anybody is hidden there. You know it's mighty easy to open strong doors from the inside."

# ORCHIDS—AND A WOMAN

*By ANDREW SOUTAR*

KAVANAGH, on his sentimental side, fulfilled all the demands of the dramatist. There was only one woman in his life, and one idea in his mind, which was that if he couldn't marry her he would creep into some corner of the world where none might know of his sorrow. In all other respects, Kavanagh was highly acceptable to those who set a value upon manliness.

He was in the north of Japan, professing some interest in afforestation, when he learned that the one woman in the world had married a certain John Maxwell, who had taken away from her people the fear of impoverishment, and brought to her an orchid of his own discovering that was to bear her name. Since Kavanagh would have gone on loving her memory even if she had died, it was not unnatural in him that the triumph of Maxwell as a rival should be of no great significance. He remained three years in the north of Japan; then he received a letter from Eunice that changed him from a man of deep reticence and brooding countenance to one of eager desire and re-established belief in the goodness of Providence. In her letter, she told him the story of three years of utter indifference and selfishness. Maxwell was gone on one of his orchid-hunting expeditions in the East Indies. He had been away more than twelve months, and in that time he had written to her only twice, and then in cold, unforgiving language. There had been quarrels from the very beginning. His mind and time were devoted entirely to the hobby of his life, and as she could not—would not, in his opinion—share the "magic beauty" of that hobby, he felt that she had no other claim on him than that represented by an allowance paid through his solicitors.

There was a time, she wrote, when Jay Kavanagh would have yielded up every other interest in his life to serve a woman who lost him because, like him, she set duty first. She wondered if Jay Kavanagh remembered, and if, in the hour of the woman's trouble, he would help her. . . .

"In my last letter to John Maxwell, I protested against the refined cruelty of deserting a wife, knowing that she and her people were dependent on him—deserting her, yet making of a solicitor a sort of relieving officer, an agent who measured out an allowance with a covert sneer on his face that was meant to remind her of her helplessness. The last letter I received from John Maxwell came from Borneo. He was going up country, he said, and expected to be back in about three months. Nothing has been heard of him since. Can you find him for me?"

There were other things in the letter that showed how deeply and accurately she had plumbed the depths of Kavanagh's mind. He was prevented by those other things from rushing across the world to her side; but between the lines of the letter he read the unwritten promise of the oasis after three years in the desert.

He sailed from Hakodadi on a coasting steamer the night after receiving her letter, and disembarked at Tokio in order to replenish a travel-worn kit and make

inquiries about the chances of getting down to Borneo and into the interior with mecurial speed. He cabled to her from the city of mud and bamboo, informing her that he was on his way to Borneo; and thenceforward his movements were swift and dramatic. It was as though the whole of the Eastern Hemisphere had become privy to his thoughts; there was the song of imminent triumph in the boisterousness of the wind; the typhoon that struck the ship off Formosa was all laughter and encouragement to him; the hum and roar of the engines were a musical accompaniment to the dream-songs in his brain. Then he was in the lazy, sensuous, aromatic splendor of the East Indian Archipelago. In the shimmer of the heat he saw the vision of Eunice as on the day when he saw her for the first time—a fragile slip of a girl in white linen; in the cool of the eastern night, with a purple sky and a moon that silvered the ocean from the side of the ship to the rim of the world, he saw her laughing at him from out of the shadows, beckoning to him from the white path that lay across the sea. And when he got to Sarawak, and heard the name of John Maxwell mentioned within five minutes of his arrival, he was guilty of a superstitious feeling that the whole world had suddenly dropped its interest in other things and was concerning itself with him, and John Maxwell, and Eunice.

It was on the veranda of the Batavia Hotel, where he was trying to wash the heat out of his throat with iced drinks, that he met Bruch, a tall, thin, weedy Dutchman, who chewed tobacco and drank "planters' champagne." He was not the type of man to appeal to Kavanagh, whose soul revolted against nothing so much as untrimmed finger-nails. Bruch appeared to have used his for every task imaginable. It was Bruch who opened the conversation.

"Rubber, I reckon?" he said, expectorating at a lizard on the wall.

"No," said Kavanagh. "Orchids."

Whereupon Bruch lifted his eyebrows and said: "Are you Westerners mad on orchids?"

"As dingoes," said Kavanagh. "Do you know anything?"

"If you're a collector, yes. But you've got to pay my price. I can put you on to the craziest things in orchids. I knew something about 'em—orchids that small you need to look through a microscope at them, orchids as big as that span above your head, orchids that are alive. Did ye get that, stranger? Absolutely alive. I've known 'em eat a man. Now, call me a liar!"

"If we'd been talking about anything else save orchids," said Kavanagh, "I should have called you one; but orchids seem capable of anything. I'm a collector."

Bruch nodded approvingly. "I'm in rubber, myself," he said. "True, you get more money for an orchid, but you've got the selling, to some mad fool, and there ain't many of them about. Rubber you can sell to anybody. There was a man of the name of Maxwell—"

Kavanagh was lighting a cheroot at the moment. He paused and looked over the flame at his man.

"John Maxwell?" he suggested. "He was a famous collector."

"Why *was* a collector?" asked Bruch. "The last time I saw Maxwell he was tough enough, but madder than a coolie who'd gone to bed with a bottle of rye whiskey."

"I'm looking for John Maxwell."

"Of course you are," said Bruch, "else you wouldn't be making so many inquiries about him."

Kavanagh had made inquiries of only two persons in the town, but he wasn't surprised at Bruch's remark.

"Friend of his?" asked Bruch.

"No," said Kavanagh, "I can't say that I am. But I'm rather anxious to meet him. I suppose it's the same man we're talking about?"

"Well, now, how would you describe him?" said Bruch.

"I've never seen him in my life. All I know is that he's been out here twelve months or more."

"Moneyed man, isn't he?"

"I believe so."

"Cantankerous sort of fellow? Not the man that you'd like to make up to? I've heard of some of his dealings, and the way he handles the Dyaks he takes into the interior with him on his orchid-hunts. This isn't a very big island, mister, but you can get far enough away to cut a man in two with a whip without anybody hearing about it. Oh! I know something about Maxwell. Married, isn't he? No children. A babyish, spoiled fellow. But did you know that he had a chest as thick as a piece of paper? What fools to themselves these orchid hunters are! They go plunging about in swamps and risking their lives again and again—for what? Just to be the first to pick up a cussed flower that dies if you look at it two minutes on end. Now, if a man had to do that for a living, there'd be something in it, but Maxwell, as you say, is supposed to be a moneyed man."

They went on talking in this strain until Kavanagh made the discovery that he liked Bruch. The man fascinated him principally because of his dry and unemotional narrating of adventures. He was familiar with every island in the Archipelago, had made fortunes and lost them, had gambled with death and taken his chance like a man in a thousand-and-one tight corners. He was rough in speech, but once he had shed the natural suspicion with which an adventurer looks upon a stranger, he was wonderfully simple, and as grateful for human sympathy as any woman.

Kavanagh dined with him at the hotel that night, and found that he was in a fairly influential position in the town, was looked up to by the hotel servants, and apparently had money to spend. Kavanagh, himself, was not a communicative man, but the wine was very comforting that night, and soberness and clarity of thought were not possible in view of all that had come to pass. He was like a lover with a secret, a secret that would be joyous only if it could be imparted to another. Almost before he knew what he had done, his story was told; and as Bruch was in no wise sympathetic towards John Maxwell, Kavanagh was conscious of a bond of understanding between himself and the Dutchman. He said to Bruch:

"I am going up-country to find John Maxwell."

"Steady," said Bruch. "I didn't believe you this afternoon when you said you were an orchid hunter. I'll be frank; I got it into my head that you were a hunter of orchid hunters. Now, don't you risk a white, clean life for a man like Maxwell. I'm a gambler; I've gambled in every port in the world, gambled for a fortune—yes, and gambled for a drink of water. But no one has even known Jan Bruch to mix in a gamble when the stakes was a woman. It isn't worth it. Now, if you're out to make money—"

"I'm not."

"I was going to suggest rubber," said Bruch, not at all disappointed, judging from the tone of his voice. "But if money isn't in your line, there's nothing else for me to suggest, unless it is that you're out for a halter. Maxwell married the woman, didn't he? What right have you to interfere?"

'I'm interfering because I believe that I can bring them together again," said Kavanagh.

"Which," said Bruch, before emptying his wineglass, "is such an easy lie that I blamed near swallowed it."

"It isn't a lie," said Kavanagh; "and if I were not your guest at this table—"

"Ja, ja," said Bruch, with great composure, "and you're big enough to do it; and that's the pity of it. There are so many jobs waiting to be done in this

world that I don't like the idea of your going up into the interior to run the risk of fever or all the other troubles that are awaiting orchid hunters and—and other fools."

Said Kavanagh: "If I've got to search this island from the north to the south, I'm going to find John Maxwell." He said it loudly, because the memory of Eunice and the strength of the wine heated his blood. He said it, too, in a threatening tone of voice, and was only brought to himself by Bruch tapping warningly on the table with the handle of a knife. The proprietor of the hotel was standing just behind Kavanagh's chair. He wanted to know how long Mr. Kavanagh intended to make his stay.

Presently, Bruch said: "Well, if so be your mind's made up, all that's left to me is to thank you for a very pleasant meeting. When a man has been hogging it alone for years among niggers and port trash, there's nothing helps him to believe that he's still a man so much as meeting a white, clean, intelligent fellow who isn't out to make money. All I know about Maxwell is that he went into the interior, maybe twelve months ago, as near as I can figure it out. He was sitting in this very hotel, at the table next to ours, sitting with a man I used to know when I was working an orchid shipment. Maxwell talked about the darned flowers until everybody in the room was sick of the sound of his voice. A quaint little fellow he is, too, with a face all shrivelled up like a chimpanzee, and eyes just as wicked. Some mighty queer stories he told about an orchid. . . . Now, what did he call it? . . . A Van Hookey—"

"Vanda Hookeriana?" suggested Kavanagh.

"I don't know," said Bruch; "it was a queer story about a Dyak, and poison, and the smell of the thing turning a man's brain. I was glad to see the back of Maxwell. No man would trust him far. While he was in this room he was talking about experimenting with certain orchids that could remove any man he had a grudge against; all he had to do was to leave an orchid in the room where he was sleeping. Now, tell me, why are men like that given such brains? It don't seem right, to me. . . . If it had been money you was out for, I could put you in the way of getting it."

"I want to get up-country," said Kavanagh, "and I'll thank you for some hints. I suppose it's possible to get hold of a guide?"

"Who'd probably slit your throat," said Bruch, pleasantly, "and that before you'd covered twenty miles. Have you ever had the handling of Dyaks? Because only a Dyak could get you through."

"I'm not afraid to go alone," said Kavanagh, jealous of his reputation as an explorer. "I've just come down from the north of Japan, where they'd never seen a white man until they set eyes on me. That was right in the interior."

Bruch was nodding slowly, as though already he had decided in his own mind that Kavanagh was a man of resolution and skill as a traveler. "You'll have to get up to the Barito River, and when you strike it, follow the course down towards the sea. You'll be certain to find Maxwell there. I heard him say that he had his own place, and didn't know of a Western house that was anything like as comfortable."

"I suppose you wouldn't care to accompany me?" Kavanagh suggested.

"No, I would not," Bruch replied, without any hesitation. "When a man has two or three rubber plantations to keep his eye on, he's not going to waste his time hunting up mad orchid collectors. I'm clearing out first thing in the morning for Java. I shall be away some months. I've told you all I know about Maxwell. Go up and take your chance, if you like, but it isn't a job that I'd like to send a son of mine on, if I had a son."

They remained in each other's com-

pany until long after midnight, and Kavanagh left Bruch feeling that the hours had been well spent in his company. He was a study, a type of man that excited the Western imagination; and while he was crude in speech, one fact impressed itself on Kavanagh's mind—his table manners were perfect, and once or twice he used an expression that hinted at an education far above the ordinary.

A strange thing happened to Kavanagh in his room that night. Before he had been in bed ten minutes he was conscious of a drowsy, sickening odor. He got out of bed to open the door, so that the slight night breeze blowing in through the open windows might purify the room. Before his foot touched the floor, a hideous scarlet film came over his eyes; there was a tickling sensation in his throat. He managed to reach the door opening on the corridor, and the fall of his body awakened Bruch, who was sleeping in the next room but one. The proprietor of the hotel, a Spaniard, also came to his assistance. When he recovered, he described what had happened, but when the proprietor said, in a meek voice of protest, "My wine is of the best, Señor," Kavanagh remembered that he had accepted too liberally of Bruch's hospitality at table. All the same, he asked that he might have another room, and this was given him. Neither Kavanagh nor the hotel proprietor saw Bruch take from beneath the pillow the two purple and yellow petals.

Kavanagh's journey into the interior and thence northward, is not to be described at any length. Whenever possible, he made use of the services of Dyaks, but, trusting to Bruch's valuation of their loyalty, he did not rely too much upon them Nearly a month passed from the time he left the hotel until he reached the Barito River. For one whole week he had traveled alone, and without coming upon any sign of a living person. On the morning of the eighth day, he sighted a roughly strung-together bungalow, erected on a miniature plateau, and facing the river. Behind it stretched the primeval forest—sandal-wood, gums, spices, camphor—a forest so dense as to seem utterly impenetrable. The climate, which had been well-nigh intolerable further south, was worse the further he got away from the equatorial line, thus confounding the hopes with which he had been buoying himself. . . . It was hot and clammy and terribly enervating; moreover, the flood season was long since past, and the river sagged lazily between low banks of evil-smelling mud which gave off a miasma that made Kavanagh value more than ever the stock of quinine with which he had fortified himself.

There was no sign of life about the bungalow, but when he raised his voice and called "Maxwell!" what appeared to be a panther threw up its head on the fringe of the forest, and turning, bolted precipitately into the undergrowth. He called again, "Maxwell!" and, now, he was within the compound. From somewhere inside the bungalow came an answer, a weak, wailing call. Taking his revolver from its holster, Kavanagh ran quickly up the steps of the veranda and tried to open the door, which was locked. The windows were shuttered. He heard the man inside call, "Break open the door," and he obeyed. Now, he was in a passage that obviously had not been used for a long while, since fungi sprouted from the wooden walls, and the rank smell of putrifying food seemed to come from every quarter. It was in a room at the back of the veranda that he found the only occupant—the frail little man whom Bruch had described.

"John Maxwell!" he exclaimed.

The man lying on the bed covered with mosquito nets said "Yes," in a tired, weary voice. "—John Maxwell. Who are you?"

Kavanagh did not answer the question. The wretched condition of the man on the bed divorced his mind from everything save a humane desire to succor.

"Just keep quiet," he said in a pitying voice. "You've got the fever bad, and if you excite yourself there'll be small chance of pulling you through." He gave his man a liberal dose of quinine, flung open the window to get what air there was, then closed it partially out of consideration for the invalid. With the skill of a trained nurse, he remade the bed without unduly disturbing Maxwell; then began an inspection of the bungalow. He passed from room to room, turned over, idly, the sheets of manuscript lying in what he supposed was the study, and smiled pityingly at the voluminous notes on Eastern orchids. The walls of most of the rooms were covered with mildew; there was a picture of Eunice hanging on one panel, from which great clumps of fungi sprouted so that they formed a fantastic framework. In other rooms were guns, the barrels hopelessly rusted; fishing rods, butterfly nets, and all the paraphernalia of a man who has given up his life to the wild. When he returned to the sickroom, he found Maxwell lying in the same position in which he had left him. Bruch had been unjust in describing the eyes as wicked; rather were they pathetically simple and resigned. The sick man touched his throat.

"Hurt me—shouting," he said, weakly.

Kavanagh said, "Sorry," as if he were to blame, and searched in the medicine case that always accompanied him for the glycerine and borax.

"'Boys' all cleared," said Maxwell, and smiled bitterly. "Cowards!"

"Don't talk," said Kavanagh. "I'll do all that. I've heard of whites clearing away from fever, so you can't blame a superstitious native."

Maxwell said, "I suppose not," and closed his eyes.

It wasn't exactly lack of sympathy that made Kavanagh add:

"If a man chooses to bury himself on an island like this he should be prepared for this kind of thing." A reference to Eunice almost found expression before he realized that as yet he had not told Maxwell his name. He was about to mention it, when the eyes of the sick man opened slowly and focussed his. Then, a thin, wasted hand, all freckles and blue veins, reached under the pillow and drew out a wallet. The hand lacked the strength to hold the wallet out; Kavanagh stooped and took possession of it. "All right," he said reassuringly. "I'll look through it presently. Meanwhile, try to sleep for an hour. I'm going to forage round for grub, and I'll get a fire going to heat some water."

At the end of an hour, he had straightened things up a little; there was a quantity of tinned food in the bungalow, and on the roof he found an ingenious combination of rain-tank and filter. He brewed some coffee for himself, went back to the sickroom to see how Maxwell was progressing, and finding him asleep, went out to the veranda to smoke. There he opened the wallet, and with the guilty feeling of one stealing into a forbidden room, took out the contents. There was a small *carte-de-visite* of Eunice, the print slightly soiled by mildew. The bold scrawl across the bottom of the card, "To John," brought a sting to Kavanagh's heart. There was a small photograph of Maxwell himself, taken when he was ten years younger, according to the date beneath the photographer's imprint. The two cards had been held together, face to face, by a rubber band. In the wallet were shriveled petals, presumably of orchids, rough notes on climatic changes and the varying periods of orchid-seed germination; but that which sent the blood rushing to Kavanagh's cheeks was a letter from Eunice. He read it, but not until he had twice tiptoed along the corridor to glance into the sickroom.

"You wrong me, John," she had written. "Jay Kavanagh was a friend in the days before you and I were introduced, a friend whose one great aim was to

bring a little sunshine into a life that was well-nigh full of clouds. If only you could meet him! No jealous thought would remain in your mind." Then, she went on to remonstrate against his indifference to her position; towards the end, she was bitter in her reproaches.

Kavanagh replaced the letter and photograph in the wallet and locked the thing in his pack. He returned to Maxwell, and for a long while remained seated by the side of the bed, staring at the flushed, unhealthy face.

"About a couple of days," he muttered.

The sick man opened his eyes.

"As—bad—as—that?"

"I was thinking about the monsoon," said Kavanagh, quickly; "it's about due."

"Lying," said Maxwell, feebly. "I know I haven't a chance. If you should meet—"

"Eunice?" whispered Kavanagh, bending down to catch every word.

"No," frowning, "Bruch."

"I've met him—in Sarawak."

"Inhuman devil." He was too weak to say more. Kavanagh bathed his brow and hands with camphor and water, and continued to watch.

Throughout the night, Maxwell tossed about on the bed; there were frequent fits of delirium, during which the names of "Eunice," "Bruch," and "Kavanagh" were mentioned; sometimes he quoted phrases from the letter which Kavanagh had found in the wallet; then he would laugh and plead and whine about the cruelty of Bruch; a moment, and he would commence to mutter about orchids and the wonderful varieties that had come under his notice. "Grand! Magnificent!" Then silence, save a low moaning that brought tears to the eyes of the watcher. He was sinking fast at dawn; Kavanagh guessed that he would not weather through the fifth hour, when vitality is at its lowest point. He was right. At four o'clock, Maxwell made a great effort to raise himself on his elbow.

"Friend"—Kavanagh patted the hand that rested on his—"cremation—not burial. Promise me. Awful fear animals scratching—you understand. Swear."

"I swear," said Kavanagh, solemnly.

"God forgive—Bruch," said Maxwell, and his head dropped back on the pillow.

He died half an hour later. Kavanagh lost his nerve and wandered about the compound till the sun had climbed high into the heaven. Before the next dawn he was making his way south to Sarawak, his promise to the dying Maxwell fulfilled; more, the bungalow had been fired, that all traces of the fever might be stamped out. The journey to Sarawak was long and wearisome, but Kavanagh struggled through with splendid spirit. He was not conscious of having done anything for which he might reasonably take credit; the thought that dominated his mind was the freedom of Eunice.

He stayed one night at the Batavia Hotel (a tramp steamer was leaving for Singapore the next day, and, there, he could pick up a liner for England), and, strange though it may seem, Bruch dined with him.

"Got back from Java last night. Did you find Maxwell, by any chance?"

"Found him dying."

"Drink? Or just—just dying?"

"Fever."

"Orchid fever? Or just—just fever?"

"Just fever. He died."

"Poor old Maxwell! And what about his 'boys'? Did you give them a hand?"

"They had deserted him. There wasn't a soul near him."

"Poor old Maxwell! And you were left to bury him?"

"I didn't bury him. He had a horror of burial." And he told of the promise he gave and fulfilled. He said nothing of the words that Maxwell had uttered against Bruch. . . .

"You'll be going to England, friend?"

"To-morrow."

"To comfort the widow? . . . Steady!"

as Kavanagh half-rose from his chair. "And the world will never know."

"What?"

"Nothing—nothing. Poor old Maxwell! Well, he's had his fun and his orchids. Eh?"

Kavanagh sailed the next day. Six weeks later, he was alone with Eunice. She was listening to his story of Maxwell's end. He minimized the painfulness of it, and whispered of the workings of Fate that had taken compassion on their loneliness. Days passed; weeks passed. And then the newspapers told of a romance of hearts that had won by waiting, of a romance that was greater than fiction, of a man who had risked his life to nurse the husband of the woman he loved in secret.

And, suddenly, Jan Bruch thrust his hateful presence into the circle the fairies were weaving. . . .

"I want to see Jay Kavanagh."

He was invited into the room where Kavanagh was sitting with Eunice.

"I met him in Sarawak," Kavanagh whispered, but his heart was beating wildly because of his indefinable fear.

Bruch swaggered in and bowed with exaggerated gallantry to Eunice.

"Maybe the lady would like to leave us a while," he suggested.

Eunice looked to Kavanagh for guidance.

"Please stay where you are," he said.

"As you please"—Bruch refused the chair that was indicated—"but I thought we might settle our business better if we were alone. The thing is—do I share without any fuss, or do I fight for my rights?"

Kavanagh was trying to laugh at what he believed to be a coarse sense of humor; then, the words of Maxwell came back.

"Sit down," he said, sharply, and Bruch obeyed. Kavanagh's was the voice that compelled obedience. "What's your business?"

Bruch shrugged his thin shoulders. "Maxwell's dead—isn't he?"

"I told you that the last time I saw you."

"And this is Maxwell's house? It was his—put it like that. Now, how did Maxwell die? Eh?"

Kavanagh was quite calm as he replied: "I told you that, too," but there was a threatening fire in his eyes.

"You said he died of fever." Bruch pursed his lips, as if to say, "Why should I believe that story?" "You also said that he hankered after cremation."

"He did. He was terrified—"

"He was—or you?"

"I? Why should I be terrified?"

"Well, you weren't exactly chummy with friend Maxwell; you remember I warned you against telling the world about your hatred of him when we were sitting in the Batavia Hotel. First thing the proprietor said to me when he heard Maxwell had dropped anchor was, 'Did he plug him?'—*he* being you."

Kavanagh said quietly: "I found Maxwell dying of fever. About the first words he spoke were against you."

"Ah!" Bruch laughed. "So you cremated him—eh? Well, that was one way of getting rid of evidence, but you shouldn't have been fool enough to blab when you returned to Sarawak."

This time, Kavanagh leaped to his feet and gripped his man by the throat.

"Are you trying to insinuate that I took John Maxwell's life?" he said, in a horror-laden voice. "I, who nursed him in his fever?"

Bruch wrenched himself free.

"Prove that you didn't," he hurled back. "We know that you went up into the interior of the island. We know that you came back and told us that you had cremated Maxwell. We know that before you went up you were all for killing Maxwell because he had cheated you out of a woman. We know—'cause the newspapers have told us—that you're going to marry the lady. And you know that you've got to pay to keep my mouth shut. Savvy?"

Eunice called out warningly as Kavanagh raised his hand to strike, and instantly he realized that is would be the height of folly to wage war against a man like Bruch with the weapons which would suit Bruch best. It was a moment for calm and subtlety, because it required no straining of the imagination to see the possibilities of the charge that Bruch was bringing. It was known in Sarawak that he had gone into the interior of the island to find Maxwell; it was known, through his own words, that he had found Maxwell and that Maxwell was dead; it was known, again through his own words, that exhumation was impossible.

Fully appreciating the seriousness of the position into which a series of circumstances had thrust him, he returned to his chair, and looked hopelessly at the thin, vindictive face of the Dutchman. Eunice marked the wavering. She faced Bruch.

"Of course, you want money?" she said.

"Do I?" said Bruch, grinning. "Well, I should think so."

"And you think you've only to ask for it in order to get it."

"Lady," said Bruch, in mock seriousness, "my sense of justice is much greater than my need of money. I owe a duty to John Maxwell. But I thought that it was the right thing to give Mr. Kavanagh a chance to clear himself. We don't want to fill the newspapers with the story, do we? You notice that Mr. Kavanagh isn't too anxious to say anything."

Eunice went to the desk and wrote a note. She brought it back to Bruch.

"There!" she said, boldly. "There's the address of the solicitor to Mr. Maxwell's estate. If it had been possible for you to blackmail Mr. Kavanagh to the extent of a thousand, you may rest assured that the solicitor will pay you ten times that amount for your story. Go to him; tell him exactly what you have told us. That's how an Englishwoman regards a blackmailer."

Bruch, confident of his ground, having carefully calculated every inch of it, accepted the challenge.

"I'm not the sort of man," he said, "to spoil a pretty little romance, but since you force me to it, the blame is on your own heads."

They let him go. Eunice watched him from the window. Kavanagh, in his chair, stared helplessly before him. She went back to him, and asked the question with her eyes. He looked up at her and shook his head.

"That man," he said, "knows that only a miracle can save me from his accusations." He told her, again, of how he had found Maxwell, and of all that had followed.

"Everything was destroyed," he said, "everything—excepting this," and he took from his pocket the wallet that he had found under Maxwell's pillow. She looked at it, and her breath quickened.

"I remember the day he bought it," she said.

Kavanagh opened it. "I didn't mean to tell you about it," he said. "There's a letter in here."

"Mine?"

He handed it to her. He had wished to keep it from her because of the references in it to himself.

"We'll burn it, now," she said, with the demeanor of a solicitor preparing a defence. He took the photograph of her and held it towards her.

"And that?" he said. "I have treasured it so much."

"And that," she repeated in a monotone, as she dropped it in the fire. "Better that nothing should remain."

He handed her the second photograph, that of Maxwell. "They were bound together, face to face," he said, referring to the two.

She took the second photograph from him, and glanced at it.

"Who is this?" she asked.

He was at her side in an instant. "What?" he exclaimed. "Why, this is John Maxwell, I presume."

"It is not," she said. The hand that held the photograph was shaking. Kavanagh was even more excited.

"Eunice," he cried, "that is the photograph of the man who was in the bungalow—the man who said he was John Maxwell. It was taken when he was much younger, but to my mind there is no doubt whatever—"

"That is not John Maxwell," she repeated, and unconsciously her hand felt for his. "Bruch!" she whispered, in a frightened voice. "Do you think he will go to the solicitor? What mystery is there here?"

"We may find out," said Kavanagh, "by hurrying around to Jamieson's office. Bruch is clever; he is cunning; the man who died in the bungalow tried to warn me against him, but the fellow had been so open with me that I suspected a private quarrel between them."

Within ten minutes they were on their way to the solicitor's office. Bruch, with the courage of one who believed that he held the winning hand, had gone to Jamieson, and when Kavanagh and Eunice arrived, it was to find the thin Dutchman crouching, rather than sitting, on a chair, all his braggadocio gone, his mouth weakly open, while, standing in front of him was a little spectacled lawyer, whose finger rested on the button of the electric bell.

"Come in, Mrs. Maxwell," Mr. Jamieson called out over his shoulder, "and you, Mr. Kavanagh. This gentleman and I have been playing a little drama all on our own. . . . There's no need to speak," as Eunice opened her lips. "Mr. Jan Bruch has left little to be said by you. Like the majority of rascals, he bungled his pretty scheme of blackmail in one very small detail, but that detail will, I think, be sufficient for the police. I was just going to touch the bell when you came in, so that we might have a larger audience, say a police officer or two, to witness the denouement of the drama."

Then he addressed himself to Bruch: "Now, my friend," he said, smartly, "supposing you repeat the confession that I dragged out of you. Don't make a mistake or let your memory play you false, because just behind your head there is a bookcase, and behind that bookcase is a young lady who has taken a shorthand note of everything you said. Your story to Mr. Kavanagh and this lady was that John Maxwell went up into the interior of Borneo, and there Mr. Kavanagh found him. You know very well that John Maxwell never set foot in the bungalow on the Barito river. . . . Just nod, that will do. The truth is that the man who died of fever in that bungalow was at one time a friend of yours. The two of you met John Maxwell, the orchid hunter. John Maxwell died; I won't say from what cause. About that time, an allowance of a hundred pounds a month was being sent out by this firm to a Sarawak bank in order to cover any expenses to which Mr. Maxwell might be put—an arrangement quite usual among travellers. Maxwell having died, in the presence of Weber, your friend, it occurred to you that it would be quite possible to make the monthly allowance live after him. Weber, being a man of weak will, and, apparently as deeply interested in orchid collecting as the late Mr. Maxwell, was frightened by your threats to expose him for his share in the conspiracy against Maxwell. Again I say, I make no accusation against you or Weber with regard to the death of John Maxwell. You managed to get Weber up into the interior; you terrified him. He took John Maxwell's place, and you collected the monthly allowance. The arrival of Mr. Kavanagh at Sarawak must have been very disconcerting, but I'll give you credit for a certain amount

of cleverness. It is amazing to me that you allowed Mr. Kavanagh to get into the interior. Perhaps you were not very far away from him during the whole of the time he was there; in fact, you have confessed as much. You knew that Weber was dying of fever. You say that one of the coolies told you so, and tacitly you admit that you left him in his sickness. Having learned from Mr. Kavanagh of how Weber died, your nimble brain suggested a more profitable game than the waiting for a monthly allowance. What a pity it is that you signed your name on that slip of paper which admitted you to this office! You must have been in a great hurry to see me, because when the commissionaire at the door handed you the slip on which to write your name you literally tumbled over yourself to get the thing done. What a pity, too, that I have a good memory! It was so easy to connect the writing on that slip of paper with one of the receipts sent to me from the bank at Sarawak. . . . Shall we press this button?"

"Give me a chance to get away," pleaded Bruch, sullenly.

"Oh! no," said Mr. Jamieson, "not until I have consulted the wishes of this lady and gentleman. Besides, the lady behind that case will have transcribed her notes by now. I should like you to sign them. Then we will consider what is the best course to take."

The solicitor stopped, and turned to Kavanagh and Eunice. "Leave everything to me," he whispered. "This is the part of a solicitor's work that my soul revels in. Besides, I can see that you two want to say so much to each other," and the little eyes twinkled behind the spectacles.

Eunice and Kavanagh passed out of the office and into the cab that awaited them. There was silence until half the homeward journey had been covered. Then she touched his arm, and said softly: "I never doubted you for a second. Does that make you happier?"

As he raised her hand to his lips, he said in reply: "If the world had been full of Bruchs and there had been no Jamiesons—if there had been no way out of the trap that circumstances had made—I should have felt no hurt so long as you believed in me."

Every woman is a poem. Some women are poems by Algernon Charles Swinburne. Some are poems by Paul Verlaine. Some are poems by Franklin P. Adams.—*Smart Set.*

We don't understand this, except that any epigram beginning "Some women" sounds profound and cynically true. Every woman is an epigram. Some women are epigrams by Oscar Wilde. Some are epigrams by G. K. Chesterton. Some are epigrams by the Smart Set—*F. P. A.*

# THE RIGHT EYE OF CARDAMON

*By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE*

CARDAMON, in Part IV of General Sessions, was summing up the famous Tinkerton blackmail case. The court room was crowded.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he said to the men in the box, with a wonderful wink of his wonderful right eye, "before I tell you what I have to say myself, I will tell you everything that the District Attorney is going to say when his turn comes. He is going to tell you, gentlemen, in that elegant, supercilious, Riverside Drive way of his—he is going to tell you this," said Cardamon, "he is going to tell you that—"

Thus proceeded Counselor Cardamon, conscious that his right eye was having its usual effect, and also conscious that behind his back the Assistant District Attorney, representing the people of the state, was a squirming, wriggling mass of indignation. For the Assistant District Attorney knew, as was usually the case, that Cardamon would leave nothing for the A. D. A. to say.

For ages the bar in all jurisdictions has decried the rule of procedure which gives the state's attorney the last say and compels the prisoner's counsel to sum up first. There was one exception to this mass of protesting jurists—Cardamon. He always knew what the state was going to say and he took the pains to say it first. He also took the pains to work the jury up to such a fever height of excitment that when he was through the District Attorney found nothing save fatigue confronting him.

But it was not Cardamon's method, after all, that won him his cases. It was his right eye. He invariably addressed the jury sidewise, as it were, and though he talked with his lips, it was his right eye that formed the thought and drove it home. He smiled with his right eye, frowned with it, praised with it, denounced with it; smote with a withering blast of vituperation and anathema—all with his right eye.

His address was very short. At the end of fifteen minutes he was once more at the counselor's table. He did not listen to a word that the District Attorney had to say, nor did he listen to the charge of the Court. He merely kept on silently taking the jury into his confidence with his right eye. At the end of the Court's charge, and, of course, without waiting for the verdict, he turned on his heel and stalked easily and deliberately, chin in air, out of the court room. At the very instant that he reached the door he placed his silk hat upon his head. The whole court room sighed with admiration as he did so. There was no man in Manhattan who could remove or replace a top hat with exactly the mathematical grace affected by Counselor Cardamon. There was no man who wore a gray frock coat so jauntily, and it goes without saying, that there was no lawyer frequenting the Criminal Court Building who could afford to enter a court room daily with a huge bunch of fresh violets attached to his lapel.

Cardamon did this as he did many other things—because he was Cardamon. He did not know, however, that out of the multitude that packed the court room, two of the spectators had risen when he rose and had followed him stealthily from

the court room, stealthily through the corridors and stealthily down the stairs.

Sinister as these two individuals were, as they sat peacefully watching the Tinkerton blackmail trial, they were still more sinister when they had pulled their hats —soft, dingy, low-hanging hats they were—over their foreheads. Just without the threshold they paused, watching the retreating form of Counselor Cardamon.

"I tell you," said one of these burly individuals, "he's the guy."

The man who said this was known to the police as Mr. Cuddy Wortman.

"I tell you, Nosey," he repeated, "Cardamon is the guy we're after. It's Cardamon we gotta have."

Mr. Nosey McIntyre, otherwise known on the Lower East Side as the Muskrat, rubbed the nasal appendage which gave him his name.

"What about Gatlin, bo, what you goin' to do with him?"

Mr. Cuddy Wortman decapitated Gatlin with a swift and expressive movement of his hand.

"Gatlin ain't one two, three, Musk," he said. "It's Cardamon for ours."

"I'm with you, Cuddy," said his companion. "If you say Cardamon, it goes. Come on."

Five minutes later they were knocking tremulously at the office door of Cardamon over on Broadway. Unlike the rest of mankind they always knocked upon the doors of law offices instead of entering. It may be said that though Mr. Wortman and Mr. McIntyre were in no sense afraid of the law, they stood in tremendous awe of lawyers.

Once inside the outer office they crept on tiptoe, with caps in hand, up to the desk of Cardamon's only visible assistant, his office boy.

"Kin we see his nibs?" they queried.

The office boy, who was deeply engrossed in the perusal of a baseball extra, never looked up. For a moment the two interlopers stood in shivering silence, then they tapped gently on the desk.

"Kin we see his nibs?" they repeated somewhat plaintively.

The office boy, whom Mr. Cuddy Wortman might have crushed between his thumb and forefinger without half trying, glanced up in speechless indignation.

"What are you giving us?" he retorted angrily, spluttering in his wrath. "His nibs! You get out, and if you don't get out I'll put you out, do you see?"

They did see and their fit of trembling was renewed. In the midst of it one of them managed to ejaculate two words, and the other four.

"Counselor Cardamon!" hoarsely exclaimed Mr. Wortman.

"We got a case," whimpered Nosey McIntyre contritely.

The office boy rose to his full height. "Sit down," he roared, "on them two chairs, and don't you move—don't you dare to move." He stepped into a private room and closed the door behind him. Almost immediately he emerged. "Busy," he announced. "You've got to wait half an hour."

Counselor Cardamon was busy. He had gathered on his way to his office, some half dozen of the leading evening newspapers, each of which contained a detailed account of his cross-examination in the blackmail case. The first duty that he owed himself was to read these papers through. When he had finished he sighed with tremendous satisfaction, placed the papers on a shelf for later insertion in a scrap book and touched a button. A moment later Mr. Cuddy Wortman and Mr. Nosey McIntyre stood bowing and scraping before him.

There was only one chair in Counselor Cardamon's private office, and that he himself occupied. It was one of his firm principles never to let the criminal class sit in his presence. He had too much respect for himself and too much regard for his office furniture. Even

when trying a case he kept his clients at least ten feet away.

As he looked upon Mr. Wortman and Mr. McIntyre, his usually severe countenance somewhat softened. They would have been surprised had they known that he knew exactly who they were. However, he bent the unrelenting gaze of his hypnotic right eye upon them and nodded. It seemed to Counselor Cardamon that along with the variety of odor that the two brought in with them, he scented the possibility of coin and plenty of it. Cuddy Wortman touched his companion.

"This here is me fren and brother-in-law," he explained hoarsely. "He's Nosey McIntyre. My name is Wortman."

Counselor Cardamon held up his hand for silence. He opened a drawer of his desk and selected three newspaper clippings from a file. He spread them on his desk.

"Nosey McIntyre and pal," he said, "burglary, twenty-third day of September; out on three thousand dollars bail. So far so good. What do you want of me? I thought Gatlin was your counsel."

They explained volubly, though hoarsely, that Gatlin was supposed to be, but that it was all off; that it was Counselor Cardamon for theirs, and that they had come there to retain him.

"It's the way you handled that there jury in Part IV," said Cuddy Wortman. "Me brother-in-law Nosey's gotta get off. You've gotta get him off. I gotta get off. You've gotta get me off."

Counselor Cardamon opened a window and lit a cigar. "In the first place," he commented, using his right eye as an artisan might use a gimlet, and looking straight into the souls of Nosey McIntyre and pal, "I suppose you're guilty."

"Aw," whimpered the Muskrat.

"All right," said Cardamon, "that's settled. So much out of the way. Now, when do you come up for trial?"

They told him. The case was set for a day late in December.

"All right," said Counselor Cardamon at length, after he had heard the story from first to last. "Now, listen to me. Do you see this desk?" He tapped it with his fingers.

"Sure," said Cuddy Wortman.

"Right," went on Counselor Cardamon. "Now, before I do a thing about this case, before I raise my hand, before I even think about it, you want to put one thousand dollars in cold cash in front of me upon this desk."

The four hundred odd pounds that went to make up Mr. Cuddy Wortman and Mr. Nosey McIntyre nearly shriveled into nothingness.

"A t'ousand bones!" groaned Cuddy.

Nosey McIntyre was stricken speechless.

"Why," went on Cuddy, still groaning, "a hundred is all that Gatlin asked, fifty down and fifty at the trial."

"Exactly," retorted Counselor Cardamon, "and that's just the difference between Gatlin and myself. He's a hundred dollar man and I'm a thousand dollar man."

"But we can't get the coin," whimpered Nosey McIntyre.

"Do you mean to tell me," returned the counselor, severely, "that you pulled nothing at all out of this burglary?"

"Mighty little," answered Nosey. "You got the paper there. They came near catchin' us when we wasn't half way through. A t'ousand dollars," he moaned, as though looking about the room for support. "Where can we get the coin?"

"You'll get it," returned Counselor Cardamon, "or you don't get me, that's all."

For a moment the two companions whispered together. Then simultaneously they dug down into the depths of their disreputable clothes. Each man produced a matted mass of bills. Together they took account of stock.

"Counselor," said Cuddy Wortman at length, "there's two hundred and fifty dollars; it's every blessed cent we've got."

"Lay it down," said Cardamon. They obeyed. "Now," said Cardamon, again fixing them with his right eye, "I will take this on account—on account, mind. No matter what happens, you never get it back; and no matter what happens, I don't raise my finger in this case until you pay the balance of the thousand down. That is understood, is it?"

For a moment they grumbled between themselves, and then they nodded.

"It's understood, Counselor," they said, "all understood. We gotta have you, Counselor, we can't afford to take a chance."

Weeks later Counselor Cardamon was seated in his office very much at ease, and yet, though very much at ease, he still was very busy. He was engaged in the perusal of the morning papers—the careful scrutiny of them, in fact. He was not an omnivorous reader; his specialty was crime. It was his pleasant pastime, as well as his allotted task, to discover, to retain in his memory, physically to file away the printed record that informed the public what crime had been doing over night.

As he scanned the headlines he found an item that interested him immensely. It was a tale of robbery and violence. Violence was always interesting, for violence earned heavy sentences—spelt big retaining fees.

BOLD DAYLIGHT ROBBERY

Paymaster on Construction Job Relieved of Heavy Roll.

So read the headlines. It was one of perhaps a dozen crimes worthy of note that had been committed over night, and Counselor Cardamon proceeded carefully to read about the others. But again and again his right eye wandered back to the daylight robbery. Each newspaper held its own particular account, but it was in the last account of all that Counselor Cardamon found what he always looked for.

"Gad," he exclaimed, fixing his right eye upon what seemed to be an unimportant paragraph, "here's the clue! They'll get those fellows, or I'll eat my hat."

For the rest, it may be said that the paymaster had been robbed of the exact sum of five hundred and eleven dollars and eleven cents.

No sooner had Counselor Cardamon placed the morning papers carefully upon his shelf, than the door of his private office opened to admit two burly figures. He fixed them, as was his wont, with his wonderful right eye; and though they stood at some distance from each other, they were conscious that his glance included both. They stood there shuffling their feet, with mangy caps in hand.

"Well?" said Cardamon at length.

"You ain't forgot us, Counselor?" whimpered Cuddy Wortman.

The two stood there pathetically waiting for a reply. They were disappointed. Counselor Cardamon simply lit a very long and very black cigar and sat staring them out of countenance. He was very immaculate this morning, seated as he was in his private room; he wore his silk top hat jauntily upon his head and was attired as usual in his long frock coat, decorated with his morning bunch of violets. He was silent, imperturbable.

Cuddy Wortman shuffled forward a step or two and once more halted.

"You ain't forgot our case, Counselor?" he pleaded. "It's to-morrow mornin'. You gotta try our case."

Counselor Cardamon drew his yellow pad toward him and held his pencil poised in air.

"What case?" he said. They told him. "Ah," he returned, "I was to have a thousand dollars in that case before I touched it."

"We paid you somethin' on account," interposed Nosey McIntyre, the Muskrat.

Counselor Cardamon merely shook his head. "I was to have a thousand dollars in that case," he reiterated, "and I haven't had it." He tapped his desk.

"When you have placed on that spot, that exact spot, do you understand, the balance that is due me, seven hundred and fifty dollars more, I will try your case—I will take it up; but not before."

Nosey McIntyre looked at Cuddy Wortman and Cuddy Wortman looked at Nosey McIntyre. They nodded to each other. Then Nosey dived into his trousers pocket and produced another roll. Mixed with this roll were several pennies which rattled down on the mahogany desk and one or two of which rolled to the floor. Nosey stooped down to recover the errant coins, but Cuddy Wortman placed his hand over the bills upon the desk.

"You ain't goin' to give it all to him, Musk," he whispered hoarsely. "Give him five hundred."

"Not on your life," said Nosey, "we give it to him all."

Cuddy's hand still grasped the bills. "Ain't we gotta get drunk, Musk?" he pleaded. "Where's the drunk comin' from if it ain't comin' out of this?"

"Drunk nothin'," returned Nosey, although his eyes glittered and his nasal appendage glowed at the very word. "Drunk nothing. What—the night before the trial? Look a-here, we give it to him all."

Without more ado he shoved the motley mass of bills over to Counselor Cardamon. Cardamon carefully drew on a pair of soiled gloves before he touched the bills, then with the swift precision of a paying teller in a bank, he counted them deftly and correctly, laying them in neat little piles of varying denominations before him on the desk.

"How much is here?" he asked.

"Every cent we got, Counselor," grumbled Cuddy Wortman.

"How much?" repeated Cardamon.

"I'll tell you how much," interposed Nosey McIntyre, becoming business-like, "there's five hundred and eleven dollars and eleven cents. Now, will you take the case?"

Counselor Cardamon drew forth his wallet and placed the bills carefully therein. He gathered up the eleven cents and dropped them jingling into his trousers pocket, and then he tapped his desk again.

"Two hundred and fifty and five hundred and eleven and eleven cents," he mused, as though speaking to himself, "make just seven hundred and sixty-one dollars and eleven cents; seven hundred and sixty-one dollars and eleven cents from one thousand leaves two hundred and thirty-eight dollars and eighty-nine cents. Gentlemen," he said—he always called his clients gentlemen after he had had a fee—"Gentlemen, before half past nine to-morrow morning you must do two things: first, have all your witnesses in court; second, lay upon this desk, in cash, two hundred and thirty-eight dollars and eighty-nine cents. Then, and not till then, I will take your case."

The Muskrat looked at Cuddy and Cuddy looked at the Muskrat.

"We gotta get it," said the Muskrat. "We gotta have Counselor Cardamon, that's all."

Three minutes after their departure Cardamon again drew forth the bills from his pocket and scrutinized them carefully. At last he chuckled to himself.

"Gad," he exclaimed, "there's the clue!"

He reached behind him and drew forth a newspaper from the shelf and placed a five dollar bill face downward side by side with the column of the newspaper containing the best account of the daylight robbery. He read softly to himself the unimportant paragraph:

> The paymaster said that he could positively identify one of the bills, and if for any reason the roll remained intact this bill would lead to the detection of the thief. He

had noticed in making up his payroll a certain five dollar bill that had upon its back a large circle of red ink and enclosed in this circle, also written in red ink, were the words, "Baby mine."

Counselor Cardamon's eye travelled from the paragraph to the bill. On the back of the bill was a large circle in red ink and within the circle, also written in red ink, were the two words, "Baby mine."

"The case," thought Cardamon to himself, "seems unusually complete."

Now, it must not be supposed for one minute that he was particularly interested in the matter. The whole thing crystallized into an unusual fact, that is all. He withdrew his soiled gloves after replacing the bills in his wallet, donned a heavy overcoat and proceeded on his way. At ten-thirty he was cross-examining a witness.

There are some days in December which admit of top hats and bunches of violets. There are other days that do not. This particular day resolved into a day of variety. At four o'clock, when Counselor Cardamon left the Criminal Court Building, he found himself confronted with a blizzard. He hailed a taxicab and a few minutes later, almost without a fleck of snow upon him, reentered his office. He doffed his top hat, carefully examined it and placed it in its leather receptacle. He drew off his natty winter overcoat with its facing of silk and hung it on its hanger in the closet; he stood his cane in a corner. Once more he drew forth his wallet. He was due that evening at the Barristers' to sit in a friendly little game. He made it a point in friendly little games never to play for more than the cash upon his person and never to enter a game with more than a certain amount of cash. He counted out two hundred and fifty dollars for his purpose. The balance of the money he placed in his safe and shut and locked the safe. He stepped to the closet, took down from another hanger a heavy shaggy ulster and a huge slouch hat; diving into a corner he produced a pair of arctics. Then he sallied forth.

Properly accoutered, Counselor Cardamon enjoyed nothing quite so much as a good old-fashioned blizzard. He started out afoot for the Ninth Avenue elevated. He was not the only man abroad that blustery evening. There were at least two others—two shivering, shaking individuals, with upturned collars and with low-pulled caps upon their heads, who lurked in odd corners, bent chiefly upon two things: first, to avoid the police; second, to discover a likely victim or so.

Carefully they scanned each passerby. The five o'clock crowd was afoot. Cuddy Wortman and his friend the Muskrat knew a ten dollar clerk from a millionaire, and the bulk of the homeward going crowd was composed of ten dollar clerks. Suddenly, however, the Muskrat nudged his companion.

"Here's a swell, Cuddy, comin' up the street. Look at him and see."

Cuddy evidently found the judgment of the Muskrat sound. He drew the gentleman into a dark alleyway and waited for the psychological moment to arrive. It arrived; and at the very instant that the swell passed the alleyway, something darted like a thirteen inch projectile from the darkness. This something was the right arm of Cuddy Wortman. In another instant they were dragging a victim into the dark shadows—shadows where they could neither see nor be seen, but where they could feel for pocketbooks. They felt deftly and swiftly and with satisfactory results. An instant later they had emerged from the other end of the alleyway, had darted down the street, had turned a corner and had disappeared.

It was Counselor Cardamon's custom to appear promptly at his office at nine A. M. At nine A. M. on the following morning there were certain people who

made prompt appearance, but not Counselor Cardamon. Mr. Cuddy Wortman was on hand and with him was his friend the Muskrat. They were told to sit and wait.

"We was told," protested Cuddy Wortman to the office boy, "to leave two hundred and thirty-eight dollars and eighty-nine cents on that there desk in there by half past nine. Kin we do it?"

"Who told you?" retorted the office boy.

"Counselor Cardamon," they answered.

"Did he say he'd be here at half past nine?" queried the office boy.

As a matter of fact, he had not, but he had said that if they laid the money there, he would take the case. Time rolled around with unusual swiftness and at twenty-nine minutes after nine, Nosey McIntyre, who had always followed the instructions of his lawyer, made a move toward the private room.

"I'm goin' to lay this here roll on that there desk," he said.

He had started to accomplish his purpose when behind him the door of the outer office opened and in strode a figure quite immaculate. The sun was out this morning, the snow glittered on the ground. Counselor Cardamon had another silk hat upon his head and wore another jaunty overcoat and carried another cane; violets reposed upon the lapel of his coat.

Without acknowledging the presence of anybody else, he strode into his office and seated himself at his desk. He placed his top hat by his side.

"Come in!" he exclaimed to his two clients.

In they came. Just within the threshold of the private room they stood stock still and stared.

"Holy cats, Counselor," cried Nosey McIntyre, "what's come over the spirit o' your dream?"

Well might they exclaim, for over the right eye of Counselor Cardamon there was a dark, forbidding patch and about the edges of this patch were evidences of black and blue. He made no explanation, ventured upon no apology.

"Gentlemen," he said, "it is within two seconds of nine-thirty, about time that you laid the balance of the fee upon my desk."

The Muskrat could not comply with the suggestion too quickly.

Counselor Cardamon drew on his soiled gloves as usual and counted the bills. Half way through his count he stopped and stared. One of the bills was a five dollar bill, lying by accident back uppermost. Upon it was a large red circle done in red ink and within the large circle, also in red ink, appeared the words, "Baby Mine."

Counselor Cardamon finished his count, removed his gloves and glanced with admiration at his two clients. Impelled by some secret impulse, he rose and did a thing that he had never done before. He held out his clean white hand toward them and shook each genially by his grimy paw.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed, "I shall be glad to take your case!"

He chuckled as he said the words. There was one thing about Counselor Cardamon that these two men did not know. He never forgave and he never forgot.

Half an hour later the court was offering him an adjournment and commiserating with him on the black patch on his eye. The Muskrat, across ten feet of space, was telling him to get the adjournment. But Cardamon shook his head.

"Your Honor," he said, "I have left this day open to try this case. I shall try it."

Forthwith the case proceeded. For the rest of the day Cuddy Wortman and Nosey McIntyre, the Muskrat, sat watching Cardamon with undisguised admiration. To them, legal talent meant tremendous lungs; to them, the man that could shout the loudest was the biggest man. They had not come to Cardamon

*because* of this. He was not accustomed to those methods. They had come to him *in spite* of his lack of tremendous voice. To-day, however, Cardamon, to the amazement of the Judge, the jury, the clerks and the spectators, shouted so that he could be heard all the way from Part IV upstairs to Part I downstairs. He knew well what he was doing. The night before two men had landed a very effective blow upon his cranium. He was returning the blow with interest.

The jury looked each other in the eye. "What's the matter with Cardamon?" they said.

This question was echoed in the mind of every person present, except in the minds of Cardamon's two clients. When Cardamon had finished, these two men leaned across the ten foot space between themselves and their counsel and whispered to him enthusiastically.

"Cheap at the price, Counselor," they cried. "That summing up was worth five thousand if it was worth a cent."

Cardamon smiled a sinister smile. "I'm glad you think so, gentlemen."

He waited until the Judge had charged the jury, then he rose, drew on his overcoat and turned once more to his clients.

"You, gentlemen," he said, "may await the verdict. When you find out what it is, please let me know."

It was at five-thirty that his telephone bell rang and a voice sounded in his ear —not the voice of either of his clients, but the voice of the clerk of the court.

"Counselor," he said, "your men are in the Tombs; the jury has just gone home."

"The verdict?" queried Cardamon, quite pleasantly.

"Sorry, Counselor," replied the clerk, "it's guilty; but you did your level best."

Cardamon hung up the receiver and chuckled. He had done his level best to secure a certain verdict. He had done more—he had actually secured the verdict that he wanted. He strode to a mirror and removed the patch from his right eye. His right eye was totally eclipsed. He turned back to his desk, lit a match, took a five dollar bill from his pocket and burned it up.

"Gad," said Cardamon to himself, "it was a tough job trying to lose that case. If those chaps had hit me in the left eye now, I swear I think I would have won it in spite of all."

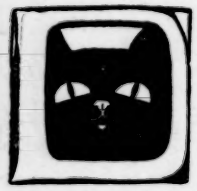
Over in the Tombs his clients wondered, speculated, moaned. They attributed their defeat to all causes but the right one. They did not realize that the fatal flaw was this, that one thing connected with Cardamon was temporarily out of business.

That one thing was Cardamon's right eye.

The dreamer who advises Ireland to stick to poetry and song and let politics alone may be a good judge of poetry, but he's a poor judge of Irishmen.—*St. Paul Pioneer Press.*

# HOME TOWN HOMAGE

***By HOWARD PHILIP RHOADES***



DOCTOR Harold Flavius Maltby sank back into the soft chair with a satisfaction felt once in a lifetime. He looked happily out at the whirling scenery with an air of extreme benevolence and peace. He was going home under circumstances auspicious to say the least—home, where his reception bade fair to eclipse the warmth with which he had been hailed in the East.

It is necessary that Dr. Maltby be visualized as a slender man of thirty-two, with large, gold-rimmed glasses of striking pattern, and the pale, clean-shaven look of an ascetic. Generations of membership in one of the "old families" had given him the dignity and poise which made him naturally assume leadership and preeminence. One could not look at him without recognizing a man of distinction and accomplishment.

There had been a time when gossips of Springville had whispered that the Maltbys had gone to seed, and that this frail boy would never fill the mantle of those famous Maltbys of Revolutionary and Civil War days.

Now, Doctor Maltby thought with satisfaction, these same reactionaries from the Maltby banner doubtless were begging to get on one of the sub-committees on arrangements for the reception.

Doctor Maltby's radiant satisfaction would take a sudden nervous turn at times, during which he looked at some remembered bit of landscape or drew one or the other of two letters from his pocket. The letter most favored was that which he had received a fortnight ago from Marjorie Lake. Marjorie was a girl in whom he was much interested.

He was pleased that he was to receive the plaudits of his own home town. He was more than pleased that he had the favor of Marjorie.

There had been a day—about the time he left Springville to begin his work in the East when he knew Marjorie as an unusual child, who put up pictures of pugilists in her room, and talked a great deal of popular heroes. But that day was past. She was now twenty-two, and to him, the most eligible girl in Springville. So far as girls were concerned, Doctor Maltby reflected, the "old established families" of the place truly had gone to seed; and Marjorie had their advantages without their decadences of charm. That is, in addition to an attractive personality, she had filial connection with a swiftly accumulating pile of money.

Doctor Maltby had no illusions about girls in the East. Springville, now so kind in paying him homage, was the place for him. This was especially so in view of the most interesting part of Marjorie's letter which said: "It seems ages since I have seen you, and you cannot imagine my eagerness to be once more on terms of actual speech with my doctor man."

"Doctor man"—the phrase reminded him of a popular song, and he detested popular songs. But, he reflected, the girl was full of youth and vivacity; and families which are not "old families" must be allowed some vagaries, you know!

In one of his nervous movements, Doc-

tor Maltby felt the need of stirring about. There were a number of passengers in the observation car whom he had not noticed. One of them he discovered now in the smoking compartment, reading a magazine. His hope that he would find someone with whom to talk—for he was in a most affable mood—suddenly was realized. He took a closer look at the man who was reading, and then said, in a friendly tone, "How are you, Mr. Flynn?"

The other, a great, strapping, pink-faced boy of twenty-five, raised his eyes.

"Why—howdy, Doctor Maltby," he stammered. "Didn't know you were on!"

"And I hadn't expected the pleasure of seeing you," said the doctor. "I'm on my way back home." His eyes shone with the light which encourages conversation. "Yes," he repeated, "I'm on my way back home."

"So'm I," admitted the other man.

There was a silence during which Doctor Maltby smiled benignly. He knew nothing of Flynn, save that the young man was from Springville. That was enough. That placed him on the homage-paying list.

"You're in the East now aren't you, doctor?" asked Flynn, coloring. He was one of those great-limbed, powerful men, who cannot feel at home with persons of superior poise.

"Yes, in the bigger cities," returned Doctor Maltby. "I'm going back for a look at the good old home folks, and a rest. I've been working too hard."

"Let's see," started Flynn, "you're a surgeon." Then he cried, "Why sure, I was reading about you the other day. It was you who cured the President!"

"The President was under my care for a few days. But his trouble was slight. Of course the papers made a good deal out of it. That case was what called their attention to my hospital work, in which I've really accomplished things. My line is—well, what the layman would call nerve surgery. I've been at it ten years now, and last year I made a discovery which led to what has been called the Maltby cure. The Maltby hospital, near New York, has been financed, and I've been overtaxing myself for the past month training surgeons. After a short time at Springville, I expect to go south for two or three months."

"Well, the papers sure have treated you white," mused Flynn.

"Yes, but I didn't care a lot for that. I've been eager to get home. The old place means everything to me. Father, grandfather, great-grandfather, all born there. You know how we've been for years and years. They've arranged a big reception for me, when I get in. That's what makes a man feel that his work is appreciated."

"Are they holding a reception for you?" asked Flynn, showing interest.

"It looks that way," said Doctor Maltby, smiling genially, and drawing from his pocket the second of his two letters. "This is from Mayor Hunter. He writes, 'The city is certainly going to give you a rousing welcome. It has no worthier son to honor.'

"He wrote that two weeks ago," said Doctor Maltby. "Doubtless a great deal has been done since then. There's nobody like the good old home folks to go the limit for you. I received some flattering praise in the East, but, pshaw! it won't mean a thing beside what the people who have known me all my life will say. But I musn't bore you with all this. I'll see you later."

"Doctor Maltby!" Flynn called, drawing his big frame up to its full height, and starting after the doctor, who was leaving. Doctor Maltby turned in his poised, clean-cut way and levelled a kindly glance at the ungainly youth's eyes.

The handicap of twenty generations of peat-burning ancestors was upon Flynn. "Why—" he stammered, "I wanted to tell you—I wanted to say—that is—I

wanted to congratulate you on your success."

Doctor Maltby thanked him cordially, and smiled a trifle at the embarrassment of the blushing giant. Then he turned, in his erect way, and went back to his seat. The swift train ate greedily of the remaining miles, while he sat alternating his smiling anticipation and his nervous looks at one or the other of the treasured letters. But mostly he perused the letter signed with the name of Marjorie Lake, for it inspired thoughts which made the regular heart of the man of science beat faster.

He recalled most vividly her vivacious brown eyes, smiling out over a crimsoned, dark skin, the girlish red ribbons she often wore, and the snow white linens in which her slender form was most frequently garbed in summer. The letter from Mayor Hunter was flattering; but, decidedly, the letter from Marjorie Lake meant more to Doctor Maltby.

Now the train passed Five Mile Locks and sped on to the point where the city of Springville had its newest pride, a real suburb, opened up by a realty company. There was a long, yellow traction car drawn up at the point where its track crossed the railroad. It was bound cityward. What was that sign on its front?—"Welcome Home!" The rest he did not have time to make out.

"They're doing it up fine," he murmured to himself, with a thrill, as he made ready to be brushed off. Two miles more and the train swung into the first scattered indications of Springville. Doctor Maltby hailed them eagerly. Never had the old place looked so good! Here was the main street of the business section. Its illuminating arches were adorned with flags, and, at a distance, he could see large photographs in the centers of the flag festoons.

Then, as he turned, another sign of home-coming caught his eye. On the grandstand of the ball park, high on the hill, where everybody could see, was a huge sign, "Welcome Home." At that moment the train swerved, and then slowed down for the railroad station.

Doctor Maltby remembered only one occasion when there had been a larger crowd at the station. That was when a President had come to town. When the train halted he saw, in either direction for half a block, a great crowd, wherein he began to recognize dozens of friends and acquaintances. As he stepped from the end of the car, every face seemed turned in his direction and over the great throng was an alert, expectant silence.

They were evidently waiting for him to speak. His arm was raised for a moment of effect before he began. In that moment there burst forth from the multitude a wild, broad-spread cheer, as when a hero comes home from war. The warm sea of pleasure in which Doctor Maltby was swimming, instantly froze to ice.

He had a dizzy feeling that the crowd was looking *beyond* him.

"Flynn! Flynn! Mike Flynn!" came surging a tumultuous roar from the crowd.

Doctor Maltby, who had descended a step or two, felt himself rudely pushed aside by a dozen pairs of hands, which were reaching up after the man behind him. He was shot out of the line of pressure, and pushed against the train, where he was pinned—he and a small man with an Adam's apple and a collar too large for him.

"Doctor Maltby!" sputtered this inconsequential person. "I was just trying to get to you—but, isn't this a crowd?"

"What—what does it mean?" stammered the recently well-poised doctor.

"Come to my machine," invited the little man, dragging at Doctor Maltby's arm. As the crowd was paying no attention to him whatever, the doctor allowed himself to be pulled over to a muddy little car, some distance away.

"Doctor Hamm," he said sharply, when they had come this far, "explain this! Where's the committee?"

"Over there," said the little doctor, indicating a point in the throng which looked like the center of a college class rush. There a group of young men were feverishly struggling to raise Mike Flynn, and deposit him in a huge touring car, covered with flowers.

"I'm sorry, Doctor," exclaimed the chairman of this one-man committee. There's been a change. I thought you knew. Mike got home the same day you did, and, you see, Mike won the World's Series."

"The World's Series—a ballplayer!" exclaimed Doctor Maltby. "Who's responsible for this? It's infamous!"

"I'm sorry, doctor, awful sorry," protested the little man, grown pale at the sight of Maltby's face. "But I didn't do it. I was against it, but they wouldn't listen. Why, they even forgot you were coming on that train. If I hadn't been there to meet you, there'd have been nobody."

"But what do they mean, after arranging to receive me?"

"Well, you see they thought you'd take it all right, realizing what an advertisement for the town Mike is. He's going to spend the winter here! Got a pool room all arranged for. To-morrow he goes to Chicago on business. They figured you could just rest up until then, and to-morrow proceed with your reception."

"Rest up the deuce!" cried Doctor Maltby. "If it wasn't that this is my home, and I know that some people—one person, anyhow—wants to see me, I'd get on that train, and never come back!"

"Climb in," urged Doctor Hamm, eager to do something compensatory, "I'll take you up." They waited until a great procession, headed by a band, and made up of divisions formed from different civic bodies, had passed. The procession was headed by the flower-girdled car, which contained Mike and half a dozen dignitaries, some of whom were mentioned in the mayor's letter to Doctor Maltby as being on the committee for *his* reception.

"They wired last night," explained Doctor Hamm. "Maybe it was too late for you to get it. All this was arranged since yesterday when Mike struck out three men with the score tied, and the bases filled, and then hit out a double that scored two men—and him a pitcher! Really, I don't care for baseball, doctor, but you've got to hand it to Mike!"

"I hadn't heard of it," said Doctor Maltby, coldly. Then he added, with warmth, "Why didn't he tell me about it? I talked to him on the train."

"Maybe Mike's getting the swelled head, already," suggested Doctor Hamm. "But at that, he didn't know how heavy they were going in for this. They just wired to ask him when he'd be here, and he answered that he was stopping off over night to see his folks."

"Let's go to the mayor's office," said Doctor Maltby. "I've something I want to say to him." Dr. Hamm, feeling that he, perhaps, had rocked the boat too much, kept silent as he ran the machine around to the front of the city hall.

Things were very Sabbath-like about this building. Doctor Maltby knew the way to the mayor's office, and he strode thither vigorously, followed by the other doctor who pit-a-patted along like a dog after its master.

The only occupant of the mayor's office was a girl who seemed much vexed over general conditions. "No, I think not any more to-day," she said. "He's on the reception committee for Mister Flynn, you know. They've a reception for him this afternoon, and another to-night. Everybody around here got off but me!"

"My identical program given for him!" fumed Doctor Maltby. "See here, young woman, tell the Mayor I'll be in to see him to-morrow. Doctor Harold F. Maltby is the name."

As they walked away the stenographer repeated, "Dr. Harold F. Maltby. Well, no wonder they cut him out. He ain't such a Greek god. Mike's got him faded. And here I got to stick. Darn!"

Doctor Maltby was in no humor to remain longer in public. He left the car in front of the Maltby residence, a very old house, in a very old street lined with very old shade trees. Here, at least, his supremacy would be felt. The roomy old house was in perfect order, under the care of Uncle Tommy and Aunt Lindy White, two ancient black servitors.

"I'll be here for lunch and dinner, Aunt Lindy," announced the doctor. "Our arrangements are changed."

He spent two hours in removing the stains of travel, in changing clothes, and in having lunch. Then he sat in the quaint, long dining room, smoking and thinking of his next step, a very pleasant one. Why call on the telephone? He would walk over and surprise Marjorie, with whom he had made no definite appointment.

What did it matter how fickle the townspeople were, so long as Marjorie cared? Immaculate, and with renewed courage, he clicked the old-fashioned front gate behind him and started up the slope toward Marjorie's home. Now he came in view of the hill upon which it was situated. Three years before, when the Lakes had lived near their small foundry at the other end of town, this had been a cow pasture, dotted with thorn trees. But three years had brought war orders, and the possession of a wonderful piece of machinery for making shells. A great change of fortune had resulted, and the Lakes were among the first moneyed people of Springville, if not among the "old families."

Doctor Maltby felt that he had achieved a democratic triumph, in acting out the assertion that the Lakes were socially equal to the Maltbys. He saw the good of new blood being added to aristocracy to keep it from running away to seed. As he glanced for a moment back into the old street, where his family and a dozen others had lived in palatial houses for three generations, he contrasted the two or three girls he knew there with Marjorie. He felt in that instant more clearly than ever what a fine thing it was for him, a Maltby, to link his name with the new financial preeminence of the Lakes.

He entered the Lake grounds through a superb stucco gateway, adorned with plants, and passed up a broad white walk to the stately house, which had been completed only a few months.

At the door a maid said, "Miss Marjorie is out. Mrs. Lake is in."

Presently Mrs. Lake came. She greeted him effusively, and they fell to talking, naturally, of his success. It was not until he made actual mention of Marjorie that Mrs. Lake said, "Marjorie will be here shortly. You will wait?"

He had hardly answered before an automobile door slammed, and they saw Marjorie running up the walk. Mrs. Lake, whose face had borne a peculiar look, akin to uneasiness and worry, excused herself. With a series of apologetic, reassuring looks backward, she started for the door to meet Marjorie. But before she reached the door Marjorie burst in, with a babble of enthusiasm.

"Oh, mother, down on the square, you should see—" she effervesced. "They've got three bands—think of it!—*three* for this afternoon, and—what?" She was pausing for some message. "Oh, well, I don't care. Hello, Doctor Maltby! Sorry I was out. But you see, I had to drive Mike down—yes, had him up to lunch. My, he's having a day of it—and he's so embarrassed. But isn't he *great?*"

Doctor Maltby's answer had neither character nor volume to dam the flood. Marjorie bubbled on: "Listen, did you hear about it? I put it over on those Chamber of Commerce men. They

wanted Mike for lunch. But I stole him—think of it—with the whole town after him, and brought him up here!"

"Marjorie," said Doctor Maltby, tightening his grip upon the hand he still held, "have you, too, gone crazy over this ballplayer?"

"Have I gone crazy—well, I just guess I have! And don't say 'ballplayer' like that. Of course he's a ballplayer. Is there any other sort of man who could get such a reception? He's the greatest ballplayer in the world!"

"I guess you're right," said the doctor, a little weakened. Then he went on, reproachfully, "Marjorie, you've forgotten all about how warmly you were to receive me. Do you remember that letter you wrote?"

"Oh—yes!" she cried, with a trace of guilt. But a sufficient explanation came to her immediately, and she said, "But that was before the World's Series."

"We won't quarrel," he said, trying to hide his irritation. "We'll forget this. Naturally you are excited over such an event, in this quiet little place. May I see you this evening?"

She grew quiet, and more serious. "No, doctor, I'm sorry. Perhaps tomorrow afternoon, for a little while. I'd like to talk over your new—serum, isn't it? But to-night I am to be with Mike."

"Marjorie," he reproved. "That impossible—"

"Please don't!" she said, with spirit. "Oh, you must know. Mamma, I may tell Doctor Maltby, in confidence, may I not? It's a secret, doctor. But I know you won't tell. Mike wired me at the end of that game—that wonderful game, —and I wired back. And he brought me this!"

She lifted her left hand. On the third finger was a huge sparkler.

"Marjorie!" cried the doctor. "Why—you don't know—you don't realize. Please—" Then he stiffened, realizing that he was a Maltby. "I will bid you good-bye," he said with dignity. "I am leaving to-night."

Mrs. Lake, to lengthen a trying scene, interpolated, as an apologetic explanation, a seemingly endless speech in which she told how Mike's father had been clerk at the foundry for years, and how Mr. Lake believed in Mike's business ability, which was to be developed when he left the diamond year after next, and enough more to make Doctor Maltby burn with shame.

But even as he stepped away from the door, Doctor Maltby felt that the incident, if his most serious affair of the heart could be called an incident, was not closed. Indignantly he tried to think of a plan, yet could summon only the thought that he had decided to go away, —he had little idea just where. But that would be running away. Doctor Maltby was a man who would never give up a patient while there was a breath of life.

Back home he discovered that there was a train south at midnight. This crystallized his protest against the whole affair and resulted in an important decision.

Pacing back and forth in his room, biting his lip, and nervously pulling at his pockets, he determined that he would stay and fight the battle out. Why should he, a man of national distinction, be foiled by an infatuated girl, and a crude hero of the herd. Surely there were sane influences which could be brought to bear on Marjorie's parents and upon herself, after this mania had gotten out of the town's blood.

There were such things as broken engagements, changes of heart, and cooled infatuations. In the cold, searching eye of the town's thinking people, how could a hulking, uncouth ballplayer stand before a celebrated man of means and family. Certainly there was some way in which this willful miss could be made to see the light. After all, the thing to do was to await the morrow, and then plan carefully.

So with faint music in his ears, telling of the return to the city from the country club, of Mike's triumphant procession, Doctor Maltby set about rehearsing a speech—the one which he was to have given to-night. Doubtless, he would be invited within the next day or two to make it, and he wished to create a perfect impression. Every move from now on must contrast him favorably with the ballplayer.

After dinner he read a short time and then decided to retire. He would need a good night's rest to start him on his campaign. For an hour he dozed restlessly. Then he was startled by a loud blare as a noisy procession went through the street, and the red-fire torches illuminated his room.

Outside, figures grotesque and fantastic were limned against the flaring of the torches. From the marching ranks arose this chant:

"Mike! Mike! Mike! He made 'em strike-strike-strike!
Flynn! Flynn! Flynn! Did he win-win-win?"

This was followed by a cheer of exulation prolonged and thunderous. Doctor Maltby groaned and turned away. After another period of restless sleep, he sank into deeper slumber.

He was awakened, some time later, by a loud knocking at his door. Then he hear the voice of Tommy White, the old negro servant.

The old man was crying in an excited way that somebody had been hurt, and mentioning the name of the mayor. Doctor Maltby was up in an instant. When he peered out of his door he saw, for the first time since his arrival, the chairman of the committee on arrangements for his reception, Mayor Hunter.

"Pardon me, Doctor, for breaking in like this," said the mayor. "Thought I'd get to see you sooner and apologize for the change. We want you to come at once, doctor! Mike's hurt. It's his arm—think what that means—his right arm. He was on his way home when his machine was struck by an interurban. Some of the others have looked at it, and they say it's nerve paralysis. But we couldn't think of them handling it, with you in town. Can you come right away?"

Doctor Maltby was first of all a professional man, and he had no thought of refusing. In fact, as he hurriedly dressed, he began to see herein a situation for starting off with a fine stroke his campaign to open the eyes of Marjorie Lake.

He was bustled into a machine and hurried to the hospital, the steps and corridors of which were lined with a growing crowd of people who had left their beds on hearing of the accident. In the faces of those who had watched his coming when he was called upon to treat the President, he had noted no such solicitude and concern.

Half a dozen members of the Chamber of Commerce, men who had reached over his head that morning to grasp Mike, now pressed forward, their faces full of appeal, begging him to relieve the suffering hero. In such wise, after spending a day abandoned and forgotten, Doctor Maltby suddenly burst into the limelight as the town's most important and sought-after citizen.

He stepped into the hospital as a king into his throne room. His slender frame was stiffened, and all of the poise and command of the morning was back. He was there before them, the famous surgeon, by his acts to convince them of his superiority. Sharp, decisive orders he shot at the waiting nurses and doctors. His face took on the look of some great general, directing a situation of gigantic proportions. He set his gold-rimmed glasses more firmly, squared his shoulders and advanced, with a great light of distinction and accomplishment in his pale, clean-shaven face. Everybody stood as thoroughly awed as the slaves of an Eastern potentate.

As he was about to step into the operating room, there was a commotion in the corridor. "It's Miss Lake, sir," said an intern. "She wants to see you."

Doctor Maltby stood for a moment in an erect and studious attitude. Then he said, with cold restraint, "She may come."

There was a new and deeper look in Marjorie's face, as she ran through the corridor. She seemed less a girl, more a woman, as she grasped his arm, and asked, "You're going to operate, aren't you? Please let me watch."

She was looking up at him in the proper attitude for a girl with respect for ability, a girl sensing truth, after foolhardiness. He looked into her earnest face with new warmth within him.

"Yes," he said. "You may watch."

"I want to be near," she said, standing close to him, and touching his arm. "I want to see it all."

"You shall be at my right hand," he answered.

In the operating room Mike lay groaning, his mighty chest and arms exposed, and a pallor over him. He looked toward Doctor Maltby and Majorie, trying to twist his tortured features into a smile. Marjorie suppressed a gasp. Doctor Maltby's face had rather more than the cheer a doctor must display to meet the ends of professional optimism.

Mike's right shoulder, that knotted mass from which swung the arm which had vanquished the greatest batters of the nation, seemed lower than the left one. With the eyes of all the hospital's nurses and doctors upon him, together with those of a goodly number of the town's more important men, who had pushed their way in, Doctor Maltby began work.

This was the work which had raised him to preeminence among the hundred million, which had given him miles of newspaper space, which had brought him fame, and which, lastly, had inspired his fellow townsmen to arrange for him a great ovation. And this was the work which would denounce those who had eliminated that ovation, and show them how shameful and hollow and unjustified had been their hero worship and their neglect of merit!

Under his trained fingers, at the whim of his brilliant brain, lay their hero, an overgrown, whining boy, a mere fellow graduated from a vacant lot because of ability to play a child's game. Doctor Maltby began work with all the confidence and vigor of the man who knows he is a figure in the world, and who is demonstrating it to lesser beings.

He was twisting and pulling at Mike's arm now, sending his slender fingers into the mass of muscle, as if probing. Then, of a sudden, he drew the arm to one side and stretched it far up. Mike gave a shrill scream of pain, and then his face relaxed.

Doctor Maltby gave a few directions in telling technical phrases and then motioned for the wheeled table to be taken from the room.

Marjorie was beside him, a wistful, eager look in her face. Her throat was catchy, and all she could murmur was, "Doctor—doctor."

"Come, Miss Lake," said Doctor Maltby, leading her into an ante-room, eager to follow up his advantage. She was leaning upon him now, as she would lean all her life he felt, she who had come to see the light long before he had pictured victory, in his brightest dream.

They were alone for a moment, and she grasped him, as if to embrace him. As he was about to close his arms around her, she moaned, "Oh, doctor, will he live?—is he all right?"

Doctor Maltby reeled, as he pushed her at arm's length, and then slowly allowed his grip upon her shoulders to relax.

"He's not hurt," he said in a low, beaten voice. "His arm was merely dislocated."

"Oh, doctor," she cried. "I am so glad you were here—to save my Mike!"

She turned, without even shaking his hand, and ran away. For a moment Doctor Maltby was alone. He stared stupidly at the great shelves of cotton and supplies, and said in a vacant, far-away voice, "For the love of Mike—for the love of Mike!"

A house physician had dared open the door. He began to ask a question.

"Tell them the king lives—and will pitch again," said Doctor Maltby, walking down the corridor.

He paused at the telephone and ordered his old servant to bring his bags to the South railroad station at once. He fled from handshakes and dodged out a side door.

The station, but a short walk away, was the smaller one of the city, and of the sort where the operator sells tickets and assists with the baggage, when not working on the wire. The operator, a young chap of the necktie age, was embroiled with Louie, the baggage-smasher, over the batting averages of a couple of players in one of the minor leagues. Somehow, major league topics had worn out this evening after the first three hours of argument.

The station factotum left baseball long enough to listen to Doctor Maltby who asked about trains south. The doctor thought vaguely of going to New Orleans, and cruising from there. "Sorry," said the ticket seller, "but I'm out of time-tables giving that connection at Cincinnati, and I don't recall it. But here, it's in the paper." He handed over a copy of the evening newspaper. As he was called away to check a piece of baggage, he said, "Look in that column, beside those baseball notes."

Doctor Maltby pored over the time-table. The young man was still busy. Then Tommy came puffing in with the bags. When the servant had gone, Doctor Maltby perused the paper again. His eyes strayed from the time-table. He read something with interest. Then eagerly he drummed against the ticket counter. The young man was before him.

"Does the morning train out of Cincinnati have a boat connection at New Orleans for Nickadore?" he asked.

"Nickadore—oh, the Central American republic? Wait. I've got a boat directory. There's one out of New Orleans Friday, and you'd get there Thursday night. Yes, you'd just make it."

"Good!" said Doctor Maltby, and purchased a through ticket.

The train rushed in, and Doctor Maltby took it. He did not even look out at the lights of his home town, as they faded behind.

Back in the station, the ticket seller started a third perusal of the sport page. Suddenly he found something in the baseball notes which interested him.

"Hey, Louie," he cried. "What do you think of that poor nut that just started for—what is it?—Nickadore—in Central America? Say, he's going to a rare place! Listen, here it says:

" 'Nickadore, Central American republic, is now said to be the only country in which baseball is not played.' "

A man has to have his dignity on very firmly to be able to hold it in place when he has a flower in his buttonhole.—*Albany Evening Journal.*

# THE LITTLE MAVERICK

*By ELSINORE ROBINSON CROWELL*

HE western beef drummer looked at the girl in khaki. In fact, he had been looking at her for the last half hour with increasingly intimate smile and insinuating eyebrows. He was a lovely drummer, oiled and scented, sport-shirted and striped-panted. And the girl was a lovely girl, really lovely. Her skin was as golden as her khaki riding breeches, but it was gold over rose and fire, and her clear hazel eyes stared dreamily from under a flare of tawny curls. She perched on the top step of the mining hotel, and her scarlet mouth moved in liquid rhythm of gum chewing. She was some pickin's, the drummer concluded, and added a tender cough to his other lures. The girl swung her eyes slightly in his direction and coyly received his enraptured glare. Victory was his. Hitching his pants a bit further from his near-silk ankles, and winking triumphantly at the intent audience of miners and cowboys, he edged nearer.

"Well, what do you think of me, sweetness?" he tenderly queried. "Sweetness" dropped her eyes demurely, and drew a tendril of gum a good foot from her hesitating smile. Slowly returning the gum, she turned an innocent gaze full upon him, and calmly remarked:

"I think you're a damn fool." Then she strolled leisurely away, slapping her trousered leg with a coiled lariat.

Joy shook the roof of the hotel, rolled in hoots and yelps down the street, while with popping eyes the drummer hurriedly withdrew. Particularly conspicuous were the mirthful snorts of one Jerry Malone. Many had been the times when he was unable to join in the general mirth over that pert young woman's rejoinders, he being the goat annexed thereto; therefore his present bliss.

Jerry was not lovely. He was huge, sprawling-jointed and grinning, with mazed, helpless-looking eyes, and hair that was merely hair. However it may be well to warn you that Jerry's sprawling joints are ball-bearing and built for soft and fearful speed. Also it is not wise to count too greatly on either the amazement or helplessness of his youthful eyes. This latter fact the delectable person in breeches disregarded entirely. For all of her twenty-three years, Jerry had been as the rest of the familiar landscape of Hornitos, Mariposa County, California, dirt—necessary but not engrossing.

Her name was Priscilla Dorothea Armstrong, wished on her by her sedate New Hampshire mother, at a time when she was in no condition to argue. For six years that mother had shielded her tender flower from the roughness of a California stock and mining community, from even the burly heartiness of the baby's father. Then she had died as composedly as she had lived, and Miss Priscilla emerged, to take life into her own hands. She liked it finely. She liked the way it smelled and tasted and sounded, and, be it noted, the smells and tastes and sounds of a western cattle ranch have nothing to do with a violet bed. In a week she was sitting on the edge of the corral

and giggling with ecstasy, while they branded the calves—anything but a giggling sight, by the way. Within a month she was straddling her own broncho, hanging on by tooth and nail, her knee grip being somewhat inadequate, and trying to throw her own lariat. Her conversational style was already appalling; her mother would have somersaulted in her grave had she heard it.

Then she settled the matter of her name. Jerry was the offender, her first goat, as he was like to be her last. He was the foreman's son, two years older than herself, and an imp of darkness. At first he resented this female intruder on the ranch society. Then, bowed to reluctant admiration of her pep, he decided to endure, but first to chasten her. His campaign began with a spirited chanting of her name, delivered at times when her ambitions were taking a most virile turn, when she was clamoring to assist at a pig-sticking, or was being extracted by the legs from under the barn where she had cornered a skunk. His manner was odious. Miss Armstrong heard him through thrice, squared about with a belligerent eye, and hurled herself upon his amazed and non-resistant form. He went over in a heap to the joy of the assembled cowboys, and Priscilla Dorothea promptly buried her teeth in his nose. It took the drastic efforts of her father, the Chinese cook and the blacksmith, to remove her, fighting like a little fiend. From that day the name was obliterated. They christened her "The Little Maverick"—Ricky for short. A maverick is a beast of wild, unbranded character, running a lone range, knowing no master. The term, applied at first in affectionate derision, proved to fit her like a skin. Unbranded, unbroken, she certainly was. The adored darling of the Bobcat Ranch, she held her admirers by no feminine wiles, but by reckless superiority at their own game. Her father she treated as a pal, cussing or ragging him, or working for him like a dozen boys, but never in all her whooping young days kissing him, nor paying him the slightest deference. She claimed all masculine rights and then some. By the time she was thirteen she had tried to get drunk, and having succeeded beyond her wildest expectations, had vehemently climbed the water-wagon for keeps. She passed up tobacco chewing for the same sufficient reason. But with these slight exceptions she was one of the boys.

Which would have been idyllic had she not insisted on growing. Baby dimples and curls went—woman dimples and curls came, which are far from the same proposition. Father-like, big Bill Armstrong was oblivious to this until her sixteenth year. His enlightenment came suddenly. He rounded the ranch house veranda one morning just in time to see Jerry sprawl headlong down the steps at the point of his daughter's hobnailed boot, and to hear said daughter deliver herself of conversation that for fire and descriptive adjectives had the most kiln-dried broncho buster on the range backed into the mesquite. When her father tried to arbitrate for Jerry, who it seemed had merely attempted to kiss her, she aimed her vocabulary at him—and the worm turned. He bellowed at her to sit down, and gasping, she sat while he surveyed her. Fire-cheeked, green-eyed and spitting like a cat, but nevertheless a woman, mature and exquisite, his daughter burst upon his vision. Billy Armstrong groaned and readjusted himself. The result was that, begging vainly for the first time in her life, she was bundled off to a young ladies' finishing school in San Francisco, there to be roped, branded and halter-broken.

Gloom descended on Bobcat Ranch, but not on Ricky the maverick. Nor

did that roping, branding and halter-breaking program come off as per order. She took to school with ominous joy, and within a month was raising more original kinds of hell than had ever been dreamt of in San Francisco. When she put the raw oysters in the principal's bed, she left hurriedly, but only temporarily, her father's money being a potent apology. After that she learned to be more discreet in her methods. No one knew for months that she had taught the mouselike little daughter of the Episcopal bishop to play poker, and swear like a sheep herder. And when the pimply pride of the millionaire house of McIntyre attempted to elope with the Japanese gardener, Miss Armstrong's enthusiastic labors for that end were carefully hidden. So she passed four hilarious years, and wound up in a burst of conventional splendor, her fairy-like face witching over chiffon draperies, a string of pearls that had cost her dad a herd, and a bunch of orchids that meant Jerry's hide, soul and grin.

So, at twenty, the little maverick came back to the Bobcat Ranch, with the newest slang, a Mary Pickford waistline and curls, but conspicuously ropeless and brandless. And Jerry, grinning and yearning, entered hopeless slavery. At twenty-one she voted, celebrating the occasion with a secretly staged slugging match between "Bad Tony" Salvatore and "Red Mike" Monogan. This affair she cheered to its writhing, slavering finish, thumping Jerry on the knee with an excited pink fist, and digging her father's ribs with an appreciative elbow. Which spoke volumes for the refining influence of Miss Smyth's Seminary.

Having entered her majority she came to business terms with her father, being incited thereto by Jerry's financial independence. Jerry had owned his first calf when he was ten. At eighteen he had a respectable little herd; at twenty was in business for himself, with his own brand and five hundred head that he herded from one range of rented pasturage to another. At twenty-three he was on the high road to prosperity; the war had come on, beef had gone booming, steers brought $100 on the hoof, where they once brought ten. Jerry whistled gayly when he rode the range. His whistling was not so chipper around the ranch house, for Ricky kept him in the soggy depths of despair, or on the equally disquieting heights of hope. His feelings were therefore mixed, when after talking business with dad she strolled out to make him a proposition.

Jerry was sitting on the ground, braiding a whip with the aid of three dogs, a tailless rooster, and 3,459 flies. Ricky sprawled beside him.

"Jerry, I want to buy in," she announced.

'Buy in—whaju mean?" he grunted.

"Buy into your herd—go in business with you, bone head."

Jerry's whip and jaw dropped from sheer amazement. Ricky, a beloved dream, was one thing. Ricky as running mate on a man's job was quite another. Love and discretion struggled in his heart. He remembered the incident of the bitten nose, and other incidents equally harrowing. Discretion won.

"Well, you ain't going to," he decided flatly.

Ricky bounced to her knees from her leisurely stomach sprawl; wads of tarweed trembled indignantly on her costume, hot wrath darted from her face.

"I ain't, ain't I? Well, I am so, you Jerry Malone," she hotly retorted.

"You ain't neither. What do you want to come buttin' in on my job for?" Jerry was growing heated himself.

"I'm coming because I want to go into business, and Dad's given me $10,000," she replied, with a superiority she vainly hoped would crush him.

"Well, go into your own business then and leave mine alone."

"But I want to go into business with *you*. I don't want to ride herd alone an' you know I don't. I wouldn't be such an old pig—" Then suddenly her temper bubbled into a giggle. Dropping on her stomach again she peered up at him through her curly tousle. "Aw, Jerry—let's!"

Jerry groaned and damned lustily. Her wrath he could combat, but he was wax before that giggle, and well she knew it.

So began that memorable partnership, now of two years' duration. She had doubled his herd, though insisting on using her own brand. Night and day that first year Ricky worked beside him, riding as fast and as hard as he, laughing, singing, swearing, teasing, or hotly contesting various business arrangements. Her dad, adoring, watched her with delight, and gave her her way in everything. Jerry, adoring, watched her with well-grounded suspicions, and balked her in everything possible. They had an uproarious good time. In June, with three cowboys, they drove their herd from the thinning grass of the hot lower foothills to the lush Sierra meadows. Jerry never will forget that ride. All day they rode, leaving behind the tar weed, "Chimise" brush and scrub oak, working higher into the bull pines and manzanitas of the chowchillas. At night they camped by the road, their campfire a scarlet dot in the looming mountain immensities, the cattle milling slowly around them, nervous, distrustful. They slept in their riding clothes, Ricky sleepily jeering at him from the other side of the camp fire, until they were both asleep. Sometimes his sleep was only a pretense, for Jerry's heart was breasting new ranges along with his thundering herd. Ricky, the imp, was no longer walled from him by the customs of a life-time. Near and alone they entered the wilderness. Freedom and love pounded in Jerry's veins.

They made summer camp in the deep greenness of the mountains, beside a perfect trout stream. For a week they fished and hunted—played like babies—dreamed beside their camp fire, the man with something warmer than flame creeping into his eyes, the girl softly silent. Something was happening to Ricky, too, a quietness, a taking of counsel with herself. No longer would she bunk with the gang in the old pal way, but at the crumbling of the fire would roll off by herself in her blankets, with never a good-night taunt. Jerry, watching, reining himself in desperately, began to hope. Then suddenly, at the end of the week, she flung herself in the saddle, announced she was going, and went, leaving the astounded Jerry one last disconcerting vision of a flushed and teasing face, from the nose of which five rosy fingers were extended in derision and farewell.

They recommenced operations in the fall on a constrained basis, which soon eased, however, to the old camaraderie. But Ricky never explained the sudden decamping of the summer, would go on no more long trips at night, and was given to disconcerting words of gentle shyness. Such hints of femininity would have been most encouraging in any other female. But Jerry, sensitive and proud behind his grin, had had his lesson; he knew better than to hope again; and he put aside the gnawing pain within him, as a thing for man's contempt.

Financially the firm of Armstrong and Malone had flourished. So prosperous, indeed, was Miss Armstrong, that two months before the opening of this tale, she had flung reason to the winds, bonded a long deserted mine, and set to work to reopen and develop it. From a stockman's viewpoint this was utter madness. Mariposa county

is primarily a mining territory. The people in it are divided rigidly into two classes, those who believe in mining and those who tee-to-tally do *not*. To the latter class belong all the cattlemen. Unique in their ranks was Ricky. She was moved to mine, not so much because that particular game fascinated her, as because she was constitutionally averse to passing up any game. Her father gesticulated, damned and washed his hands of her. Jerry argued, quarreled, and secretly watched her every move. And Ricky sat on the hotel veranda, lured the western beef drummer to his doom, and watched Luigi Castanetto's sixteen-horse team pulling in her new hoist.

Jerry, outwardly mirthful, inwardly wrestled with anxiety. He was not narrowly prejudiced in his opinion that her mining venture was rank foolishness. Mining and cattle raising are totally different jobs. In the cattle business every cowboy on the range had known Ricky since she was a baby; her only problems were work and loneliness, her world a place of great skies, clean winds and a friendly trail. But in mining she worked not with friends but with suspicious strangers, imported foreigners mostly, men of brute bodies and toil-shrivelled brains. Her only guide was her wily foreman, Jo Diaz, a yellow-bellied snake, if Jerry had ever seen one, and her world a haunt of slimy darkness, foul air and choking runways. Moreover, mining, hard at any time, was in a wicked mix just then. It was April, 1917; war had recently been declared, the I. W. W. had started trouble, and their delegates were working along the Mother Lode, leaving a trail of dissatisfaction and strikes. Nothing had happened in Hornitos yet. But it "weren't no business to break into just then, damned if it was." Wherefore Jerry watched and worried.

His anxieties did not touch Miss Ricky in the least. This was "some game"—had stock raising lashed to the mast. While Jerry meditated she was standing under the "gallows frame," watching the disposal of the new hoist. Hoists, gallows frames, skips and compressors had been Greek to her until this year, but now she accepted them as a matter of course. The trick was obviously to turn rock into money. If she could turn hoofs and hides into money, why not rock? She gave a wriggle of satisfaction at the way she was getting onto her job, and dug gleefully at Manuel Silva's small boy, who clung to her side. Little Tony, aged five, round and brown, with merry, shoe-button eyes, was her latest pal, the fruit of those strange new moods. Hitherto she had regarded children as unpleasant, but necessary, vermin. But lately she displayed a playful tenderness toward them, wiped their noses with a brisk hand, armed herself with "all-day suckers," against their wants, and went about her work with Tony's grimy little paw clutching her.

The work went swimmingly. Two shifts of Austrians, brought down from Calaveras county, opened the old shaft in record time. Once opened there, as per report, at the bottom of the two hundred fifty foot shaft, was a ten foot face of $7.00 ore. Not very high grade ore, and not worth working in the old days of inadequate machines and prohibitive prices. But now, with electricity to run the modern pumps and hoists, compressors, drills and air pipes, it was a different story. Now she could make it pay, even if it did have to be custom milled for a while. So she gravely planned with Foreman Diaz, and inwardly capered with glee.

A month went by. The profits were piling up, and Ricky was assuming such an air of intense wisdom that it was difficult to converse with her. Meanwhile Jerry, watching, learned things. He met her that evening as she came swinging home, her flannel

shirt spattered with mud and candle wax. At sight of him, a provoking smirk appeared upon her face, for Jerry in his recent role of "nursie" was in her black books. With a mocking salute she passed him. Jerry disregarded the taunt.

"Hi, there, Ricky—want to talk to you," he yelled.

Ricky stopped impatiently, as befitted a woman of affairs. "Well?" she demanded.

"*Well* nothin'—there's hell poppin'," said Jerry. "See here, Ricky, you've got to cut out this mining for the present."

"Cut out my mine! Well, I like your nerve!"

"I don't care whether you like it or not. Don't be a fool, Rick. You know the trouble there's been at all the other mines. Well, it's coming here. There's an I. W. W. loafin' around, and he's been talking to your men. They're going to strike, an' if you don't give in they'll flood the mine for you. I tell you you've got to quit," and Jerry's jaw clicked in a way that should have warned his lady partner.

Being warned, however, was not that young person's strong suit. She promptly snickered insultingly and lisped:

"Tum an' spit it out in mama's hand!"

Jerry glared until his eyes popped. With all the warmth of his ardent manhood he longed to slap her, slap her hard. But for considerations, as discreet as they were chivalrous, he desisted. So he merely remarked in a badly strained bellow:

"Well, hop to it, then. And I hope you get yours, Priscilla Doroth-ee-a Armstrong," the latter being delivered at a rapid gallop.

Now, despite her flippant replies, Ricky was anything but at ease. For three days she had been noticing strange things among the men—grumblings, secret conversations, an air of lowering constraint. Even the manners of the hitherto fawning Mr. Diaz seemed to be slipping into something that bordered on defiant impudence. It wasn't in Ricky's wind-swept soul to be afraid. But the sense of danger watching, hiding, made her cattily alert.

She ate her supper in unusual silence, even ignoring her dad's friendly attempts at a row. Ricky was meditating, and it was hard work. Every vibration of her tense instincts told her she was up against it. She had never faced indignity or mutiny. That this was due fully as much to her father's money and position as to her own power never entered her head. Nor did she dream of that fundamental contemptuous distrust of women workers that lies in men, be they residents of a suffrage state or not.

She could not sleep and at eleven started for the mine. She had never been there during the night shift, but decided it was time to begin. Passing Manuel Silva's house she heard sounds of drunken brawling, the feeble protests of Mrs. Silva and baby Tony's cry, as he was slapped. Then the door flew open and the sobbing little chap came tumbling out. Ricky caught him up, her throat tight with rage. She knew better than to interfere in a Portuguese family quarrel, but she could have drawn and quartered Manuel.

"There, Tony, old scout, don't you cry—Ricky's got you," she crooned, hugging him close. "Tony want to go mine with Ricky? Want to go down big hole?"

Tony assuredly did. He continued a diplomatic amount of intermittent howling, but his soul was off on the new adventure.

The mine was a strange thing at night—disconcertingly unfamiliar: a core of shadow-shot light, fitful, hectic, encircling and overwhelming it; dark-

ness, haunted with sinister shapes; skeleton forms that flung themselves, racked, against the sky; tenuous things that threaded the air like monstrous evil webs; hunched masses, crushing; and noises, sighs and gusts and mouldy-damp, that did not come by day. Watching outside the circle of light, with a cautious hand hushing small Tony, Ricky tingled to the strangeness, seeing it as an evil background for something more vitally malicious. The men, who should have been working, were grouped by the gallows frame, listening. A stranger was addressing them, a stranger with a bulbous, pale head, unusually flat as to back. His flesh was unwholesomely blonde, his figure lumpy, inflexible. But his eyes were of a peculiar hard light blue, fiery, intent, focussing tremendous power. His voice was harsh, but his words were evidently honey dew to his audience. Ricky caught broken bits—"riting in audomopeles, tamn dem"—"backbone of the nation"—"rice and demant rigdts!" It seemed ridiculous to her, quite like a vaudeville skit. She could see herself imitating him to her father's delight, and unconsciously she began to goggle her eyes and protrude her impish form in mimicry. The men were, if anything, funnier with their rolling eyes and villainous scowls. She was sure it needed but her resolute presence to dispel the whole melodrama. With her chin squared she entered the light —to receive the biggest jolt of her existence.

The men faced her blackly, with a stolidness that rapidly heated to sneering derision. As a woman she might have commanded their covetous admiration, but as a boss she had butted in on a man's job, and she could take what a man would get. The blonde gentleman regarded her with peculiar coldness. In his country women were females. Those doubting it were enlightened. He had recently assisted at a little market festivity in Liege, where some dozen Belgian ladies of aristocratic and advanced ideas were "enlightened" to their life-long remembrance. Five of them had thereafter killed themselves. He surveyed Ricky with a look that made her gag with rage.

"What do you mean by keeping my men from work?" she hotly demanded.

"Burhaps du men hab someding to say aboudt dot," he replied with a sneer.

Ricky lost her temper. Shrill with anger she shouted, "Get off my land you — — loafer, or I'll have you kicked off. And you men get back to your work poco pronto, or as sure as God made little apples I'll can the bunch of you."

Then, not waiting to see her orders obeyed, so certain was she of obedience, she called:

"You, Sidro, get to your hoist. I'm going down. I want to see what those damn bums have done since they came on. You men can come on the next load."

Picking up Tony she climbed into the skip. For an instant Isidro hesitated, then, at a look from the German, stepped to the hoist, reversed the lever, and the skip slowly slipped out of sight, the candles in their caps flickering until they melted into the darkness.

For a few seconds the men stood shuffling, uncertain. Then the I. W. W. delegate took up his harangue again, with added haste and heat. It did not take long to win his point. The men were flicked in the raw, savage at the woman who had dared to jump them. For five minutes he talked; then one by one they reached for their lunch buckets and slouched into the night, muttering. Old Alberti was last. Ricky had nursed his wife, paid his rent, given him the plugcut he was chewing. He stood uncertain, his hand on the bell signal. But the agitator stood

beside him, and in an instant his face was scarred with rage. "Damn her," he growled, "let her stay there for a while and get a little scared; it'll do her good. She'll climb out on the ladder fast enough when the water begins to rise, and she finds the hoist won't work." He pulled the switch, cut off the power, and the pump stopped.

She had gone clear to the bottom of the shaft, the three-hundred-foot level, from which a new drift swung to the south for some hundred feet. At the end of this drift the night shift should have been working. Toward it she and Tony groped their way in the scanty candle light. Her temper was mending. She was confident that she had settled the matter, and rather elated. She chatted gaily with Tony, lifting his reluctant plumpness from the puddles. It was very wet. This drift lay two hundred feet below normal water level, and it took incessant pumping from the twenty foot sump at the bottom of the shaft to keep the water under control.

Arrived at the end of the drift she importantly inspected the face. As a matter of fact Ricky's inspection was nine-tenths bluff. She could have diagnosed any cattle disease known, but her mining knowledge was far from being exhaustive. However, she poked and scrambled with gusto, aided by the overjoyed Tony. Tony was having great fun paddling. Never in his experience had the drift been so beautifully wet. Ever as he squealed and splashed it grew wetter. At first Ricky, deep in mineralogy, did not notice. Then she began to look for the men who were strangely slow in coming. Fifteen minutes — they ought to be down. Well, probably they were talking off their grouch; she'd give them a little time. Squatting high on a pile of rock she invited Tony to come and hear a fairy tale. Tony heard her absently. Being nearer the floor he was concerned with something more fascinating than fairy tales. Noting his absorption, Ricky scrambled down and scrambling—screamed. The water was over Tony's shoe tops, and a rising flood stretched into the darkness! Frantically she grabbed the signal rope, and rang for the hoist. Then catching up Tony she ran for the skip-station. There was no sound, no swinging clank of pump, no whirr of descending skip. Darkness above and around, and through the darkness the lipping rise of water. Again and again she rang. Then fearing to wait she lifted Tony.

"Come, let's pig-a-back, Tony, up on Ricky's shoulder." Squealing with delight the little fellow wriggled to position, and Ricky began to climb. Now Ricky of the big heart and haughty tongue was tiny as to body, and Tony was a twisting chunk. Straight up through the grim darkness of the seventy per cent. shaft the ladder stretched, coated with slime, every rung a possible death. Behind came the water, falling, reaching, softly, swiftly. The first thirty feet were possible. Then her heart rocked. Fear was on Ricky at last, strangling fear, as slowly she rose, grasping Tony's plump leg with one hand, pulling herself up the treacherous ladder with the other.

"Up we go, sonny, hold on tight. Sit still, Tony; be good piggy-boy." Tony kicked and gurgled. Ricky gasped in torture, clung to the ladder, pressing her cracking head against the cool slime—clung half conscious until the memory of the water stung her to horrified haste. Up past the abandoned two-hundred-foot station, with its filled-in drift, nearer she crept to the hundred-fifty-foot level. Alone she would have scrambled out like a cat. But now, with the weight of Tony's body dragging her, and the fear of his death numbing her, every step was agony. At last the hundred-fifty-foot station! Steadying herself on the station she

paused, and Tony saw his chance. Enough of pig-a-backing for the present—the puddles for his! With a delighted whoop he cast himself from Ricky's shoulder, skidded over the slippery platform and plunged headlong down the shaft, just as Ricky, shrieking, threw herself after him. His trousers caught in her clutching fingers, ripped but held; and Tony, blubbering, scrambled back to safety. Ricky lay flat in the darkness, her candle out, as was Tony's. There was darkness in her brain, as in her eyes, a darkness and a growing agony. She felt Tony's fat hands, jerking, tried to rise, clawed and struggled, and with a gasping moan collapsed. Something was broken somewhere—pain swept her. Unconsciousness came near, but she fought it, talking through chattering teeth.

"Tony, listen—Ricky tell story 'bout —fairies—damn fine—fairies—" Her voice broke, then marched bravely on. Below the water heaved—rose—clutched—

JERRY took another turn in front of the ranch house, stubbed his toes, and swore like a trooper. He was sleepy, tired, mad. Six A. M., and the little fool not home yet. Probably gabbing with the men. If he, Jerry, was anything but a rotten idiot he'd go home and forget her. Being a rotten idiot he might as well have a look at the mine, and see what was up. Half a mile took him to his look. Then he began to run.

Not a man to be seen, machinery all stopped, no answer to his call—nothing. Yes, at the mouth of the shaft, something—Tony's Teddy bear, mangy companion of all his wanderings. Jerry began to climb frantically down the shaft. So climbing, he came to a huddled heap, a finished fairy tale and a small boy, who paddled in water that seeped over the platform's edge.

"Ricky—Ricky, old girl," groaned Jerry, lifting the little body in his arms, pride and caution forgotten, all his great love naked raw in his breaking voice.

"Ricky 'sleep," commented Tony, trying to poke her eyes open.

But Ricky was not asleep. A tired smile fluttered over her face, and a faint voice whispered, "Jerry—" before she fainted away.

Jerry never remembered quite how he got them up and back to a ranch filled with crazed men. One picture alone holds—a big Billy Armstrong facing him, hands on his shoulders, trying to speak. There was a grisly hour of waiting for the doctor's decision, an hour only slightly mitigated by the sight of the fluent German being ridden past on a rail, stripped of clothes, but amply provided with a coat of tar and feathers.

But at last the doctor came out. Shock and a knee cap twisted, from torn ligaments. She'd wear a cast for a while, but he'd bet it wouldn't faze her, plucky little devil. They let Jerry in to see her alone. She seemed unbelievably tiny, and white. He knew neither what to do nor say. He looked away, opening and closing his clumsy hands. A minute went like eternity. There was an impish giggle.

"Sorry you did it, Jerry Malone?"

"Sorry! Me? God! And me loving—"

He had said it at last. He dared not look—prayed for an engulfing miracle. Then, the faintest whisper, shy but gleeful—

"Aw! Then—let's—old Jerry."

He could not believe—but in a panic lest it be a mistake, he found her lips, and for a little while went mad with joy.

Finally, calmed and sure, he grinned at her dolefully. "Well, I suppose I'm in for a hell of a life now," said Jerry.

"You damn sure are," whispered Ricky, and kissed him under the ear.

# SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS

*By G. A. WELLS*

AIN'T aiming to insult your intelligence, sir, by asking if by any mischance or kick of fortune you've ever been in an insane asylum. And not having had that woeful experience, of course you can't understand the similarity between one of them institutions and a crazy man-o'-war. We of the service, sir, calls such a ship a mad-house. Not that its inmates, or in this case the ship's company, are anyways loony or loose in the head. It ain't that, sir.

Mad-house ships always contain more or less ingenious brains to devise devilment and make the ship mad. You see, sir, it's like this: A ship that's been in commission some time is all set and has a definite policy for its conduct. Officers and men are wise to each other's ways; they know each other's likes and dislikes, accomplishments and shortcomings. Every man aboard knows what's expected of him and does it without being told a dozen times. After a manner, everybody is as near congenial and sociable and friendly as the rules allow.

On the other hand, there are ships that haven't been flying their commission pennants long enough to have the spare threads whipped out by the wind. The officers and men are generally trimmings and offal from training stations and navy yards. They're odds and ends, as a man would say.

Training station recruits are the worst of the lot, because they don't know nothing pertaining to a man-o'-war. Their instructors tell 'em the difference between north and south and inform 'em that a full-rigged ship don't have but four ropes, the rest being halyards, sheets, lines, stays and so forth; then they're graduated and goes out to inflict theirselves on the general service. About that time they really ought to be going home to suck on nursing bottles some more.

Now, when a ship's unlucky enough to draw sufficient of these gentry to start a middling-size hell, there ain't no concord and harmony that you can see with the naked eye. Everything's mixed up and you don't know heads from tails. While every man's got his station for every drill from ship collision to bag inspection, like as not he arrives hence by walking over ten or a dozen of his mates bound on the same errand. A ship without a definite running policy, sir, is like a fish without a fin—there's plenty of strength and intent, but there ain't no order exercising 'em.

I'm telling you all this anent the story of Spike Devine and his bunch that's put aboard the Carolina when that good ship hoists her pennant and takes her place in the fleet. I've seen many a mad-house of a ship, me wearing five service stripes, and some of 'em I've unfortunately swung my hammock aboard; but when I say to you the Carolina was the worst mad-house the service ever saw, I'm telling you what any other man, knowing the circumstances, would tell you. Yes, sir, she was one mad ship, plumb loco and completely off her nut, and it was owing to Devine she carried off the blue ribbon.

Once I'm marking time on the old Lancaster, which hulk is some home, I tell you. What is a home? Well, sir, appertaining to the navy, when you're

aboard a ship where you feed on butcher's meat, fried eggs, real bread, with bona fide pies, along with all the shore leave you can use, just figure you're home.

If I remember right, I'd recently put up my hand and swore on for another cruise in this man's navy. I was enjoying life, lots of shore liberty, and the pursuit of coy maidens ashore, when Dame Rumor drops in to state that there's a crew making for the Carolina, which vessel had just dropped down splinter clean from Cramp's yard up the Delaware River.

Naturally, there was considerable excitement aboard the Lancaster concerning who was and who wasn't going to be in the draft to make up the Carolina's complement. Being a fourth-cruise man at the time, and knowing something of ships generally, I told myself right off I didn't want no Carolina in mine. This opinion I expressed to a youngster just fresh out of Newport training station. He'd just reported in from his first furlough, I believe, and hadn't yet had time to be cured of the terrible disease of wearing seagoing hats and extreme bell-bottom pants affected by raw recruits. He was some astonished when I hoped the hope I'd be permitted to rot my life away on the Lancaster instead of the Carolina.

"And why shouldn't a man want to be in a draft to such a beautiful ship as that?" he asks, all innocent.

The Carolina, being moored just across the dock from us at the time, sure did appear pleasing to the eye. She looked like a lady's watch, delicate and trim, but mighty competent to keep good time.

"Son," said I, looking at him with sorrowful eyes and pity in my heart, "I reckon you've heard what that Shakespeare gent says concerning the outward appearance of things. Says this party, 'All that glitters ain't gold.' By the same token, neither is a ship a good ship because she ain't scraped off her first coat of paint against navy yard docks or been fouled by coaling ships. Don't go too strong on new ships, son."

"Humph!" says he, and parades away to find somebody more in keeping with his views of ships.

But it wasn't for me to say where I'd sling my hammock, me practically belonging to Mister Samuel, U. S. A. Whether or no, I was ordered to stand by for a call aft. I packed my belongings with curses on my lips for the dirty swab that had put my name on the Carolina's draft list. It was a howling calamity, that, putting a fourth-cruise man aboard a new ship.

In due time three hundred of us, mostly raw recruits with some of the hatching shell still clinging to 'em, marched down the gangplank of the old Lancaster and up the gangplank of the new Carolina. A fresh Jimmy-legs and his deputies and a fresher ensign met us at the gangway and lined us up on the quarterdeck to tell us off in watches and give us our division and ship's numbers. Me, being a boatswain's mate, first-class, was assigned to take charge of the quarterdeck, which same I was supposed to care for like a mother cares for her kiddies.

I'm not going into detail about my own personal ups and downs, though God knows I had enough of 'em to fill a book, what with licking into shape a mob of wild Indians allotted to the fourth division which had the care of the quarterdeck and all pertaining thereunto, including sufficient brass work to start a foundry.

I'd seen recruits before and thought I knew the breed from A to e-t-c., but I hadn't been aboard the Carolina a scant week before I realized that recruits has their little idiosyncrasies, same as cats and women. No two of my lusty crew thought alike, and they all thought at the same time; so, you see, sir, it was pretty much like setting off a pack of firecrackers, they were that jamborous.

I had calculated to get me a chicken

out of that draft, the same being a nice young boy to bring up; but there wasn't a chicken in the whole lot. They were mostly tough old pullets and a few spiteful roosters with spurs. And, sir, Devine was the toughest and spitefullest of 'em all.

This Devine was hard as nails and showed it in every twist of his hulking body. He came from Hoboken, and your true Hobokenese is a rough-neck in every detail, from love of women to saloon brawls. Devine must have taken a post-graduate course at being tough. Fight! Well, Devine could have picked up a good living fighting around the clubs in preliminaries, and I reckon he'd have made a good headliner in the main bout.

Now, you'll always find a few extra tough nuts aboard any ship, and the Carolina wasn't no exception; she had some good ones. Devine made it a special point to look 'em up and have a go at 'em. He cleaned up. Finally there was just one left and he was the big racket. Devine got him, too. It's like this:

Devine goes up on the fo'c's'le one evening to scrub out a suit of whites, and there he encounters this Short-jab Mullins, who gets that *nom de guerre* from the fact that he wears the heavyweight belt of the fleet, which he's won by a swift, short jab that puts the then champion in the sick-bay with a busted jaw. The trouble between Mullins and Devine comes about over the hose for rinsing soap out of clothes. They both reach for it at the same time. Mullins, thinking of that belt he's wearing, pushes Devine aside. Mullins gets another belt when Devine comes back strong with a stiff right to the left breast. When it's all over, Mullins gets the hose, but it's somebody playing it over his battered face trying to bring him to. That made Devine chief devil aboard and the honor went to his head, because he strutted like a peacock.

Now, in the nature of human beings, sir, there's always a certain amount of glamour and magnetism about such a man as Devine. Of course, he had his followers even before the fight with Mullins, but when he puts Short-jab out of business his trusty band was added to until it comprised the biggest part of the ship's company. And Devine ruled his subjects like a king on a cannibal isle. He made 'em dance and sing. As for the ship's rules, Devine ignored 'em and made a set of his own. But when his rules run counter to them that's set down in the Blue Book it became necessary for King George, who's our First Luff, to show Devine where he'd erred by sticking him away in the brig for a week or ten days where he'd have time to think it over.

Even then, him being on bread and water, with a full ration every third day, mess attendants managed to hollow out a loaf of bread and stuff it with regular grub to be smuggled in to Devine when the sentry's back was turned. And you can bet your life sentries always turned their backs when Devine's meal time came, because I ain't ever met the man that wants to be beat up by Devine. Only fools monkey with dynamite, sir.

But regardless of how Devine was stuck away in the brig, he managed to keep in fighting trim and sassy as a Bowery barkeep. It looked to me a heap like the officers couldn't do a thing with him. The skipper could have got rid of Devine by giving him an undesirable discharge, but he didn't want to do that. Under his devilishness there run a good-paying streak through Devine, and when the fit took hold of him he was an A-1 man.

Once I saw him drive the entire ship's company into putting on two thousand tons of coal in four hours, thereby winning the coaling prize for the period. He did it by sheer force of will and his two big fists, not forgetting the fear of him hanging in each man's heart. Another time I saw him go overside and pull a mate out of the North River when that

turbulent stream was on the ebb and running like a millrace; and if you've ever seen the old Hudson at such a time, sir, you'll understand what a man's job that was. Another time he drags six men out of a fire-room where a six-inch steam pipe had burst. That got him forty odd days in the sick-bay with his arms and face like a piece of raw meat.

Such things as those couldn't help but make everybody, officers and men alike, admire Devine; but at the same time there wasn't a man aboard who didn't fear him. In spite of his good qualities, Devine was pure devil and was chiefly concerned in making the Carolina a madhouse.

"Devine, I'm going to make you captain of side cleaners," says King George one day when Devine goes to the mast to get judged for some infraction of the rules.

"All right, sir," says Devine, who was expecting the usual ten days in the bull pen below decks.

"I give you *carte blanche*, Devine," says King George.

"Sir?" says Devine, with a squint in his eye.

That made King George smile a bit. You see, Devine hadn't had much education back in Hoboken.

"A free hand," explained King George. "I expect you to keep the sides spotless. If I should go out to inspect some day and find so much as a black dot on that white side I'll hang you to the signal-yard."

"You're on, sir," says Devine.

A severe look from King George quelled a riot of laughing, and Devine saluted and went away.

There's only one thing to do when you get hold of a tough guy you can't handle—give him authority and responsibility. King George had an eye to the future when he appointed Devine captain of side cleaners. Devine's duties consisted altogether in keeping the sides of the ship in good condition against the searching eyes of passing admirals.

In those days the fleet was painted white and spar, not this dirty green it is now, and white picks up a heap of dirt, especially rust from bolt-heads and port shutters that goes streaking down over the side. Having a certain responsibility that way, Devine thereafter conducts himself more sedate and dignified out of respect for the Blue Book, and didn't feel so competent about leading his pals into devilment. It near broke up the little alcohol parties they used to have down in the anchor-engine house. Jimmy-legs went to rot on their jobs, you bet.

And I reckon Devine was about the best side cleaner the Carolina ever had, sir. King George looked special for leave-overs, and found nothing but pure white and neat spar all around. Number Four brig went to rack and ruin, almost, for want of a tenant, because Devine wasn't doing no ten-day sojourns at all; he was taking his three a day at general mess with the rest of us.

It happens we're anchored in Hampton Roads just off the Livingston Hotel early one July. A dozen or more ships of the fleet are there rendezvousing just prior to a jaunt to Bar Harbor for a few weeks' drill on the northern drill grounds. This Livingston Hotel is a monstrous affair, standing out in front of everything, Fort Monroe squatting just behind. It's the biggest thing you see going into the Roads, that hotel. The management caters to the service, both arms of it, and many a gala event is pulled off under its roof. It's a swell place all around.

Well, on the Fourth, the same being some large day in this man's outfit, there's to be things doing ashore afternoon and evening—track meets, swimming matches, baseball and a big spread at night at the hotel. In the afternoon our ball team was due to play the Kansas' team; and both of us being at the top, the Kansas leading by one game, there's big interest. If we win the game it was likely we'd win the pennant, because the

season was unusuallly short that year owing to the fact that we had to go to the yards early to get ready for a cruise around the world. You remember that trip, sir.

The game being pulled off at the fort grounds in the official way, society would turn out in their glad rags to witness the event. Much betting was going on, not only between us and the Kansas, but amongst the other ships in the fleet. The biggest bet recorded was the one between our skipper and the skipper of the Kansas, both of them well off in this world's kale. It was a thousand a side, the winner to donate the winnings to a big feed at the hotel for officers of the fleet and fort and their wives and friends. Swell event, yes.

The management of the hotel had kindly rigged up long tables on the lawn out in front of the hotel where the feed was to be spread at eight bells that evening, with dancing afterwards in the big ballroom inside. This gave the diners a go at the cool evening breezes and a chance to see the fleet illuminated after dark. They always illuminate the fleet that way on holidays and special occasions, and it's a sight worth any man's money.

Now, if there was one bona fide baseball bug aboard the Carolina that bug was Devine. He was mighty near as good as a brass band and a group of fog-horns when it come to rooting for the home team. In the interests of the noble art of rooting he had organized the ship's company into a gigantic rooting chorus. When Devine had his songsters going strong you could hear 'em as far as you can hear the report of a twelve-inch gun.

One night, just immediate of the Fourth, while we were sitting around smoking and waiting for hammocks to go, Devine got out his four or five hundred warblers for a dress rehearsal, so to say. They hadn't warbled very long when King George gets a wireless from the yard three miles up the James River asking for details of the mutiny. King George asks Devine would he please put on the mufflers.

Well, along came the third of July and merges into the early morning of the glorious Fourth. Then some person or persons unknown spilled the beans. The beans weren't exactly spilled, sir, but they were pretty closely connected with what happened that day. We were to have baked beans for breakfast the morning of the Fourth, and as usual they were baked in a dozen or more big iron pots the afternoon and evening before and set out on the galley stove to settle and keep warm.

When the cook opened up his galley about four in the morning there were no more beans than a rat in evidence. Just empty pots, and even a few of the original number of them were missing. There was a big hatch just over the galley, and, to keep dishonest persons honest, King George had had a heavy wire netting bolted over the hatch. The cook looked up at the big hole that had been cut in the netting, then at the long-handled boathook with one end resting on the galley stove and the other end passing out through the hatch above. It didn't need no Sherlock Holmes to understand what had happened in the wee hours.

That morning at breakfast we dined on cold corned beef, coffee and bread, that being the best that could be mobilized on the spur of the moment. And maybe the skipper and King George wasn't sore at that wanton depredation. They raved and tore their hair and swore they'd get the man or men who had perpetrated that atrocious crime and send them to prison for life.

After morning quarters we were mustered on the quarterdeck and the skipper made a little talk. He spoke to the point. Oh, my, yes! Maybe he didn't blaspheme the culprits, unknown though they were. He wound up with a plea for the guilty parties to step forward and confess like men. Then he stopped speaking

and folded his arms across his breast, his eagle eyes taking in each man personal. He waited about fifteen minutes for a response, the while every man eyed his mates like they were pirates and ready for slaughtering, then none being forthcoming he twisted his lip savage-like and spoke again.

"Very well, my men," says he. "The guilty men will either confess or none but officers and the ball team leave this ship to-day. I will give you till noon. Dismiss, Mr. Tolliver."

If the old man had told us he was going to blow up the ship at noon he couldn't have knocked us sillier.

The rest of that day was torture and misery and wore our nerves down to the raw edge. Every minute up to noon we were expecting to hear of the guilty being took with remorse and confessing their sin. Nothing doing. Those that are guilty have either died or they've got mumps and can't speak. You'd have thought you were in heaven, so innocent were the faces of that ship's company.

By noon every man was on his toes and them that weren't running around deck threatening all kinds of vengeance in the hopes of inducing the guilty to take offense and discover themselves, was standing at the rail looking off toward shore with mournful eyes. And chief amongst them that swore bloody vengeance was Devine. God pity the poor wretch that confessed when Devine was within striking distance; that party would have passed straightway to eternity without the preliminary of dying.

By the time I piped down for dinner, Devine was a raving maniac. There wasn't no heart in that meal, sir, because, you see, the time limit had expired with me piping down. The liberty boat was due to leave at one-thirty, so right after dinner Devine plays a lone hand and goes to King George and asks to be let go ashore. That's the first time I ever heard of Devine begging for anything.

But Devine's begging was no good; King George states that he is not in command and ain't got no call to interfere with the orders of him that is, adding in a hinting way that it's a mighty good thing he ain't in command, else he would hang every man aboard in order to get the right man or men.

This is passed to me by the marine sentry who's doing duty at the First Luff's cabin at the time and hears the passage at arms between Devine and King George. Devine returns to the topside dejected and downcast. He curses everybody aboard to let off steam, then settles down and says nothing more. But I'm the lucky guy and am told off to take charge of the liberty boat.

Well, come one-thirty, I get out the boat and bring it around to the port gangway and load the team and their gear. As we pull away from the ship there ain't enough men in sight to make a corporal's guard, just a few here and there looking sick and glum. As is usual in such cases, the ship's company should have stood by to give the team a send-off; but if there were any cheers aboard the Carolina that afternoon they were rendered down in the double bottoms where they couldn't be heard. It was the saddest affair I ever attended.

I went to a funeral down in Guantanamo station once, sir, when the old Kearsarge buried seven men in one afternoon account of a turret explosion at Cape Cruz, and believe me, if that wasn't a riot of fun compared with the present event. They ought to have hung black crape on the Carolina and called her dead.

Naturally, not having the moral support of the ship's company, rooting like lunatics behind their backs, our men didn't have much show to win that game; they were beat before they went on the field. As I remember it, our crowd was to have the right field bleachers, the other gang taking the left field bleachers, the grandstand with its society and officers in between.

And maybe that society wasn't some

splash; they looked like a lot of people out of a fairy book, every woman having on her Sunday dress and the officers in gold lace and cocked hats. And right in the van, so to speak, in adjoining boxes in the very center of the grandstand, sat the rival skippers and their parties.

Our skipper being cruel and unrelenting and upholding the dignity of discipline aboard his ship, I was about the only member of the Carolina's crew, except the ball team, to see that game. So when the manager of the affair interviewed our skipper and learned what had happened, he opened the right field bleachers to a few hundred civilians from Norfolk and other places nearby. You see, the audience would have looked lopsided and unbalanced with one set of bleachers that way.

But I'll just skip along to what happened later, sir. Enough to say that the Carolina's team was beat eleven to one, and they got that lone score on a fluke. I think a Kansas man made it on purpose, out of pity.

Our team losing that way, it was up to our old man to shell out that thousand plunks he'd lost. It paid for the big feed. Feeling sorry for our boys, I reckon, the skipper of the Kansas asks our old man if he wouldn't let both teams sit in at the eats; and our skipper, being peeved about losing that thousand, was reluctant. He finally agreed and we went to bat at a long table just behind the speaker's table.

Oh, yes, there was going to be speaking, sir. Did you ever know the Fourth to sneak by without speeches? I'm not telling you what the various speakers said that evening, because I don't remember; I'm going to give you the gist of what our old man said in his speech.

He was some nifty speaker, too, our old man, and spread it on thick. While he felt disappointed, in a way humiliated, by being defeated on the field of honor, says he, he found consolation in the thought that only such a team as the Kansas' could turn the trick. It wasn't a kid's job to beat the Carolina, says he. It was no more than natural, says he, that a vessel that had been longer in commission should be more highly organized and efficient, but he thought wonderful strides in that direction had been made aboard the Carolina. He broadly hinted that he was responsible for the strides.

Said our old man, he hoped to instil into the breasts of the noble men under his command the virtue of loyalty to officers and ship that would eventually make the Carolina the trick ship of the fleet. He wasn't as open with his words as that, sir, but everybody knew our old man was tossing nosegays at himself and brickbats at the Kansas' skipper. He spoke at length on the wonderful power of discipline and how no skipper could succeed in his profession without wielding the mailed fist. I took it that he was apologizing for not letting the Carolina's crew come ashore that afternoon.

"So, ladies and brother officers," says he, "discipline is the foundation upon which rests the future of the service and this grand and glorious republic. Out there in the harbor you see the power of the nation of which the Carolina is no mean representative. In its surpassing beauty the Carolina—"

Just then a siren tooted and every ship burst into a glow from stem to stern and from rail to truck. There must have been a billion lights on those ships, sir. Between the masts of each ship was her name in big illuminated letters.

And plainly the Carolina was peer of them all. Our old man had sprung a surprise on all of us with his red, white and blue lights, the other ships sporting just plain white lights. The Carolina stood out like a blushing rose in a desert and was the target for all eyes. The little yelps of delight told she had made a big hit. Our old man smiled till I thought his head would crack open.

"Behold! brother officers," says he,

looking the Kansas' old man straight in the eye, "you see what loyalty to a ship and harmony between officers and men will accomplish when—"

There the old man's voice broke off short like somebody had pulled his tongue out by the roots. There wasn't no lights at the tables to speak of, only them little Japanese lanterns strung on wires, but I could mighty easy see our old man's face was white. He was groping around like a blind man for a table or chair or anything that would hold him up. It seemed like he was drunk, he was that unsteady on his pins.

What was it? Well, sir, it was sufficient. It was a bit of illumination that wasn't down on the bill, and the Carolina, being moored broadside on, it was the biggest thing in the world. Standing out on that old Carolina's side from the bow to the break of the quarterdeck, and runing from the base of the hammock netting to the armor belt in glowing, glaring, luminous letters was this:

THIS IS A HELL OF A SHIP

Who turned the trick? I don't know, sir; you guess. All I know is that the letters were luminous paint, and figured to be the same as our ordnance officer bought and paid for out of his own pocket to try out a new scheme of his, painting shells with the stuff so they could be traced at night firing instead of using the usual shell-base tracers. The paint happened to be the wrong kind for the purpose, however, because it wouldn't show till it got wet. The ordnance officer stowed it away in the paint lockers to be turned in when he went to the yard.

The paint must have been smeared on the side in the afternoon and water applied at the critical time. At the inquiry the boatswain reported that about half an hour after illumination had been turned on he found several hose running water on the superstructure deck, so it was figured that whoever pulled the trick sto d on the hammock netting and let the water run down the side over the letters.

Devine? Well, I wasn't there and couldn't say. But remembering that Devine was Devine and had access to the ship's side and the paint lockers, and was a ball fan and a lot of other things, you—well, figure it out for yourself, sir. Thank you, sir, I'll take another glass of the same.

Ha, ha! We guess those folks who jumped to the conclusion that, because he is facile and brilliant, Secretary Colby must necessarily lack prudence and foresight, will feel pretty cheap when they hear that he inserted a clause in his lease of the Hitt house giving him the right to sublet whenever circumstances over which he has no control may require. —*Harvey's Weekly.*

# CARTER ROBB ALSO RAN

*By LOUIS SCHNEIDER*

TO him who could read it, the brim of Carter Robb's hat told the story of how his days were spent. From being pressed between the back of his head and the rough walls of his cabin while he held down a dangerously back-tilted chair, it stuck up as impudently at the back as the tail of any wood wren in the tangles of Moark county, whose lazy, hazy hills lay all about. That feature of it voiced a sort of defiance for what views the world might hold for the balance of Robb's make-up—skeleton, flesh, skin, clothes, and the rest of his make-up—which had reached a state of droopiness demanding early action if the whole were to be saved from entire loss of its languid hold on deferred hopes, and a consequent lapsing into utter disrepute.

Robb hadn't been born with a whittling stick in one hand and an open knife in the other, but he had acquired the whittling habit and developed it to such an extent that his wife sarcastically professed to be afraid of what tragedy might be enacted in their sagging bed on that night when Robb in his slumbers should attack a stick of dream pine with a very real Barlow blade.

Robb's wife looked as washed out as her oldest calicoes. She twisted her hair up in such a tight, round little knob at the top of her head that if she had owned such a thing as a "sto'-boughten hat" you certainly and instinctively would have looked into it for the other half of the snap fastener. Its tightness seemed somehow overdone, yet further glance would have convinced you that in that hard little knob and the one corner of her mouth which lifted a trifle sarcastically lay safety for her features. But for the restraining influence of these the immobile mask which is the lot of so many of her kind would have sagged into an expression of unrelieved tragedy.

The fact that his wife was passing in and out at the door at his elbow, about the business of a week's wash, did not disturb Robb; but it was evident that something was being turned slowly over in his mind this morning, for his knife had produced far less whittlings than usual. The way in which he let the soft pine stick get away from him and in which he again recovered it proved that it was something far removed from the realm of immediately visible things that filled his mind.

"Mahaly," he announced finally as he hooked his heels more securely on the rounds of the chair and slipped farther down in his seat, "I'm goin' to run for sheriff, so I am."

She tobogganed two fists full of garments off the lower end of the washboard and held that position while she ran a double-edged glance over him. "That's so you'll stand a chanct not to get run in some o' these days on account o' your shif'lessness," was her verdict.

"Just the same, I'm a-goin' to run, so I am."

"Sooner you git started, the better."

"Good idee," he rejoined. He dropped his chair to its unaccustomed all-fours and rose. With thoroughness he searched his pockets and collected sun-

dry coins, which he counted as he went. "A dollar seventy-three. Well, it'll have to be enough. Who ever heerd o' a candidate havin' to pay his way, anyhow? Goo'bye, Mahaly."

The sarcastic corner of her mouth lifted ever so little. "Good-bye, if you call that gone," she chanted to an accompaniment of sudsy splashings, without looking up. "Guess you'll ride that old pelt that Deacon Flint hung onto you last week."

"That old Blucher hoss is a good hoss," defended Robb.

"Yeah—but for what?"

"He's got good blood in him, I tell you. Aw, you'd 'a-kicked if you'd 'a-knowed I been tradin' pocket knives, an' "—he exhibited his knife triumphantly—"I allus git the best of 'em at that! That blade's a dandy, an' I got a dime an' a nickle plug o' chawin' to boot. Still, the fust time I dast trade anything bigger 'thout lettin' you know fust, you—"

She stopped her splashings and gave him an eye before which his fell. "Some day," he began, "you'll feel different—"

"Git back on your chair an' finish your mornin's work, Cart," she snapped. "'Tain't every day you find a whittlin' stick as good as that'n."

"Dogged 'f I do! I'll show you, so I will."

He stalked away to the rear of the cabin and to the rickety stable. Five minutes later he rode out the back way without so much as a farewell glance.

"Durned 'f I don't just natchally bust loose plumb right for this, so I will, just to show her."

He hailed the first wayfarer he met. "Hey, Cleet, stop a minute. I'm runnin' for the nomination for sheriff, an' I want you to vote for me, so I do."

"You don't say!"

"I do say, though."

"Why, there's seven after hit, already."

"I know it. That'll give me all the better chanct."

"Mebbe. Mebbe not."

"Sure. An' the nomination on our ticket is as good as bein' elected. I'm a-goin' to see everybody I can an' if I don't git there 'twon't be 'cause I didn't try."

He rode until night, and every man whom he met was bluntly asked for his vote. Some laughed; some said they would consider the matter; some promised. Through it all he kept working industriously. Late in the afternoon of the second day he rode through a gap into a field where he heard the sound of an axe.

"Why, hello, Nate," he greeted as he came near the worker. "I wondered who was tearin' round in here. Say, I'm tryin' for the nomination for sheriff on our ticket, an' I want you to vote for me."

"Runnin' for sheriff?" The other mopped his forehead vigorously. "I thought when I saw you ridin' up that mebbe you'd took to tradin' hosses, by the look o' things."

"An' if I was," asserted Robb, "I'd be tradin' off a mighty good 'n."

"Good'n?" His listener took off his broad-brimmed straw hat and thoughtfully hung it on a protruding hipbone of the animal in question, and mopped the top of his head. "Good for what?"

Robb turned in his saddle and brushed off the offending hat as one would brush away a half-witted fly. "Durn it, that's what my wife said. I see right now you don't know nothin' about hosses, so you don't. I shore hoped you had more sense thataway than my wife. Let me tell you somethin'—"

He launched into a history and pedigree that soon had the other man looking the horse over closely and prying open its mouth to look at its teeth. The outcome of it was that, after having stayed all night at this place he

rode away on a different horse of much the same sort, eleven dollars and twenty-five cents in money, and at the end of a long cord he led a liver-spotted hound pup. That day he got the dead-sure promise of half a dozen voters and the I'll-think-about-its of as many more. But when night came it was not this of which he was most proud. At the farm where he had stopped for dinner he had traded off the hound for an old six-shooter, a silverine watch that had undoubtedly been bought by the pound, and a better cinch for his saddle.

But his host for the night gave him a bit of news while they sat and talked after supper, which, in the end, took the edge off his prospect of winning the nomination.

"You don't say!" he ejaculated after he had heard it. "Bill Hartsock's out o' the race, eh? Well, that'll give me more o' a chanct."

"Well, no. Hartsock got out in favor of Jim Timmons, you see. Tom Hicks engineered the deal, and he's big enough to purty near swing it through, I reckon. Timmons'll make a mighty good sheriff, too. With him behind a gun, I don't reckon anybody'll start anything much."

Robb considered this last gravely while a furtive hand felt of the lump caused by the six-shooter in his inside coat pocket.

"I believe a man had ort to be enough o' a man," he declared, "not to have to use any shootin' irons to back him up when he says anything." He yawned and looked at the clock. He drew out his watch and compared the time. "Say, ain't your clock just a leetle mite slow?"

"Set it by my watch, and it's gen'ally about right."

There was an immediate comparison of watches, and before he went to sleep Robb placed under his pillow a watch whose ticking was far less vigorous than that of the one he had acquired at noon. Also, he was richer by a fairly good single shot rifle, taken in on the deal.

On the following morning, after having drawn from his host a promise to vote for him, Robb rode away. At a crossroads he came upon a prairie schooner, the gypsying occupants of which were loading up preparatory to the day's journey. There was a calf belonging to the outfit, however, which apparently was not of a mind to gypsy this morning. It had its owner badly tangled up in its stake rope, and cursings and bawlings mingled as the two went down together. Robb rode up and looked on while the tangle untangled itself. The owner yanked the panting calf up to him and aimed a vicious kick at it. He missed, and caught sight of Robb at the same time.

"Want to buy—this—"

"Don't say it," advised Robb. "Yeah, I'll dicker with you."

By dint of hard bargaining he came off with the calf without parting with more than the rifle and the watch.

"Say," he yelled back after having ridden some distance, "I forgot to say anything to you about it, but if you happen to be votin' here in this year's primary I want you to vote for Carter Robb for sheriff—that's me!"

Dragging his newly-acquired and unwilling property, he went on. At a steep ford trouble waited for him. The banks were slippery with mud from a recent rise, and as his horse floundered out on the opposite side the calf suddenly decided to stop below. The unexpectedness of this action jerked Robb out of the saddle and off his steed. Luckily he had an arm crooked through the reins; for the horse whirled, slipped the reins over his head, and began to back away. Prostrate in the mud, Robb kept his hold of both calf and horse. Every time he made a move to rise, one or the other would bring him down again.

Finally the horse won in the tug of war, and Robb came to the level of the bank. Always far from being a silent man when circumstances demanded words, he lifted the floodgates of speech as he flung and scraped the mud off himself.

"Mahaly'd have somethin' to do 'f she could git holt o' these here clothes now," he chortled finally. "Wouldn't this hit her on the funnybone, though—An' me runnin' for sheriff!"

At the next farmhouse he stopped, making sure that he was far enough away. Whistling the farmer out he turned himself slowly about.

"Ain't that a heck o' a note?" he wanted to know. "Seein' me an' you are nigh of a size, have you got an old suit you could part with for a dollar or two, mebbe?"

It so turned out that the farmer had, and, retiring to the barn, Robb effected a quick change. When he came out the farmer was making friends with the calf.

"What'll you take for him?" he asked.

"Dunno's I want to sell him. I—well—my wife's been wantin' a calf like that for a long time, but I don't reckon she'd mind if I'd sell this one if I could git another one somewhere—provided I got enough out o' it."

"Well, what do you think he's worth?"

"H u m m m m m ! He's mighty good stock, so he is, an' I had ort to have about two dollars, anyway, for the trouble I've had with him—so we'll say about nineteen dollars an' a half would be about right, don't you reckon?"

A little haggling realized the sum, and with his old clothes strapped behind the cantle, Robb rode on. The people with whom he stayed that night had a good laugh with him over his story of the mishap of the morning.

"Not half bad clothes right now," he laughed, displaying the soiled garments, "'f they was only washed. Ain't got anything you'd trade me for 'em? They'd just about fit you, mister, so they would."

"Nothin'—'cept an old fiddle, maybe."

"Let's see her."

When Robb rode out the next morning he carried over his shoulder the old violin in a battered case. He traded horses again that afternoon, adding twelve dollars to his belongings, but the violin and the six-shooter he failed to turn.

About an hour before sundown he was ambling along through a strip of woods, fingering the weapon in his pocket and wondering where and how he would be rid of it to advantage, when his horse stumbled and lurched forward. There came the crash of splintering wood. The violin case jumped on his back, and the thousandth part of a second later came the sound of a rifle shot from beside the road. Robb jerked his hand out of his pocket to help gain his balance, and out with it came the six-shooter.

Like a flash he swung the muzzle on a point where a little tongue of smoke had belched out of a bush.

"C'mout of it!" he barked.

A long, lanky form, bearing a longer muzzle-loading rifle sulked into view. The scowl of hate on his face changed to one of utter surprise.

"Goodness gracious, Agnes!" exclaimed the newcomer. "Ex-cuse me! I shore thought you was Zeb Stewart! By heck, I did! You're a-wearin' of his clothes, or I'm a liar."

"I may be a-wearin' 'em," incised Robb, "but you're worse'n a liar, an' if I ever git to be sheriff—which I'm a-runnin' for right now, and I want your vote at the primary; Carter Robb's my name—I'll see to it that your sort'll git what's a-comin' to 'em. What if I am a-wearin' clothes I swapped Zeb Stewart out of honestly?"

"Hope I didn't hurt you none," fretted the other.

"That reminds me, so it does." Robb swung the case off his shoulders and opened it. "Doggone you," he burst out, "you've went and played it now! Lookee here! Busted the neck plumb off'n it!"

He flung the tangle of wood and strings into the roadway. "That'll cost you twenty dollars, so it will!"

"Twenty — dollars! That fiddle wasn't wuth that!"

" 'Twas—an' more. Just when I was a-fiddlin' myself into the sheriff's office you come along and— You needn't snort! Bob Taylor, over in Tennessee, fiddled hisself into the Gov'nor's chair onct, as everybody knows. Come acrost with that twenty."

"I hain't got no twenty."

"What have you got?"

The culprit dug out an ancient tobacco bag and held an accounting.

"Thirteen dollars and sixty-seven cents," he owned to. "An' it hain't more'n onct in thirteen years an' sixty-seven months that you'd catch me with that much."

Robb studied a moment and then dropped his weapon in his pocket.

"Gimme ten. You vote for me in the primary an' boost me all you can in this neck o' the woods an' we'll call it square."

"Lawd bless you, that sounds good to me," joyed the other. "You could've shore put the fixin's to me for fair."

"I'm goin' to say with you over night, if it ain't too far," announced Robb.

That night he got rid of the six-shooter.

At the end of the week another of the candidates dropped out of the race, and, inside of two weeks, another. Each time he who retired tried to swing his following to some other candidate, but none retired in favor of Robb. Two weeks before the primary there were but three left in the race, and these stuck.

Robb kept busy. He had the promise of many votes, and hopes of enough to carry him to victory. But he wasn't to be satisfied with hopes. He got busier. The nearer he came to the end of the campaign, home, and his wife, the harder he fought.

On the Sunday before the primary he made for the county seat. On Monday he was out early and in late, and in vigorous fettle. On the day of the election he tried his best to see every man who had a vote to cast. But it was an utterly glum Robb who rode homeward on Wednesday morning, head down and rein slack.

"Hello!" greeted someone. "Got whipped, didn't you?"

He looked up. It was Nate Steele, riding the very horse on which Robb had come away from home. The horse was in far better shape than it had been at the time of the trade, but Steele's appreciative eye took in the one on which Robb sat.

Robb merely nodded in reply to the other's question.

"Pretty good nag you're settin' a-straddle of," commented Steele.

Robb nodded again.

"How'll you swap?"

Robb sighed deeply. "Might as well, I reckon. Thought I'd kind o' like to keep this'n, but I don't somehow seem to have no ginger in me no more."

But just the same Nate Steele paid well for the bargain they struck.

Robb did not even trouble to mount after he parted from Steele. He led the horse from there all the way home. He tried to sneak in, but his wife happened to see him coming. After he had turned Blucher into the stable lot he walked up to the house.

His wife had gone to work in the garden by this time, so he reached inside the door, lifted out a chair, placed it at a proper distance from the wall

to tilt back nicely, searched out a soft pine stick, and perched himself in his old position.

He whittled slowly. The sun lengthened the shadows, so that he had to jerk down the slouch brim of his hat more and more. After a time his wife passed him, still without speaking, and went in and busied herself with the evening housework. Finally she thrust out her head.

"Supper," she said.

They ate supper in silence.

"Got beat, didn't y'?" she prodded as she crossed knife and fork on her plate.

He nodded. "Bad."

"I see old Blucher's in a little better shape than when you rode him off," she ventured, "an' you're lookin' some slicker, an' you're wearin' some better clothes. Still got your dollar seventy-three, or have you been borryin' somewheres where you won't never pay it back?"

For answer he placed before her a package which he drew from an inner pocket. "I wa'n't 'bleeged to borry none," he glummed.

She opened the package. With an exclamation she slipped back her chair and rose. In unbelief she thumbed the bundle of bills which she held.

"Two hundred and fifty-seven dollars! Cart Robb, where'd y' git it, I want to know? You didn't—didn't—"

He had drawn his chair over to a clear place by the wall, settled his hat firmly on his head, and tilted back so that the wren's-tail of a brim stuck straight up along the logs.

"Made most of it swappin' horses," he mumbled. "Swapped seventeen times."

He slumped lower while she digested this information.

"An' you done all that in the time you was gone? Set up. That ain't nothin' to be ashamed of. I see right now what you was cut out to make a livin' at."

He thudded the chair forward, dropped his elbows on his knees, and his head between his hands.

"Yes, I allus 'lowed I c'd make it at that, but—Mahaly! Goshamighty! They whupped me! They done it by underhanded tradin' around an' promisin' o' deputyships an' all that sort o' thing; but—they whupped me!"

A sad tear jerkled down the side of his nose, hesitated a moment, gathered itself bitterly together, and in utter dejection let go all holds and dashed itself to pieces on the floor.

Silk shirts may go to $25 or $50 and never get a murmur from us. But when spuds are boosted we holler "Foul!" In these days of h. c. l. it is what goes into the tummy rather than what covers it that is of paramount importance.—*Judd Mortimer Lewis.*

# THE LOST DAY

*By RAMSEY BENSON*

HEAT broke six points almost at the tap of the gong and it was hard for Tarbox to think of anything else; naturally, since he had bought one hundred thousand bushels of the September option in the firm persuasion that the market had touched bottom and could go no lower.

He was in a manner dazed—not so far as to forget that he had to go out of town that morning but enough so that he ran down to the station half an hour ahead of his train. The discovery that he had half an hour to wait was some shock but it didn't serve to rouse him altogether. Dazedly he paced up and down behind the gates of the trainshed and when he was tired flung himself into a seat, to stare at the passing throng with absent and unseeing eyes.

There was a woman in the next seat with a baby in her lap.

Tarbox was about the last man in the world to interest himself in any particular woman and baby. He was past forty and a bachelor, and if he stared at the passing throng he didn't so much as turn his head in the woman's direction.

A minute or so passed without anything happening. Then the woman asked Tarbox if he could tell her what time it was. He didn't hear her.

"Pardon me, but can you tell me what time it is?" she repeated.

Tarbox faced about. He didn't answer but he pointed to a big clock, with a dial ten feet broad, not farther away from the woman than she could have tossed her handbag.

She blushed painfully. "How stupid of me!" she exclaimed, and bit her lip.

The little incident stamped her with a certain simplicity, and her simplicity somehow touched a chivalry in Tarbox—the rather rare chivalry which doesn't so much distinguish women from men as the weak of any condition from the strong. Here wasn't exactly a woman in distress but a woman of the kind that distress is particularly apt to overtake, and anyway Tarbox permitted himself to glance at her more attentively. He saw the blushes. They stamped her with more simplicity.

The baby had extraordinary eyes. At least they struck Tarbox as being extraordinary. They regarded him intently and he thought them very bright and blue. It was nothing to him either way but he guessed the baby was a girl. He permitted himself a glance at her and she caught him at it. Her bright eyes danced. Tarbox wasn't used to that sort of thing and the baby's eyes caught him off his guard, in a manner of speaking, so that he turned his face frankly toward her. Whereupon the baby laughed right out and held up her fat arms to him.

"Lucile!" chided the woman, gently.

The reproof checked the baby's advances only temporarily. For a little she drew back and hid her face in the woman's bosom, then right away she peered out with her bright eyes as filled with roguish good will as ever.

Tarbox felt a smile gathering on his countenance. He was just that detached, he felt the muscles working to form the smile and that was all he had to do with it consciously. Something far down in him, something apart from his ordinary

prudent self, forced his face to answer the baby's good will, deep speaking unto deep as it were.

Here the woman put in her oar. "Baby," she remarked, "misses her papa so much!"

Tarbox perceived that she was dressed in black and a sympathy surged up in him, much as the smile had formed, detachedly. In some sense his heart went out to the baby. He hadn't what you might call a hard heart; orphans always did appeal to him, collectively if not individually. Every Christmas, if the market had been at all good to him, he put his name down for a tidy sum in aid of orphans.

The woman might properly have held her peace after that but she didn't. "It's so tiresome waiting when you don't know anybody!" she sighed.

Tarbox was under no compulsion to rejoin, absolutely none. Even more properly than the woman, he, too, might have held his place. But no. "Waiting for a train," he declared, "is the most tiresome work in the world."

His hand lay, without premeditation, where the baby could reach it. She made a shy dab at it. She grew bolder and touched it. Finally, with a great and sudden access of bravery, she laid her hand in his and left it there.

That was where Tarbox lost his identity, or something like it. Nor was he long about it. Nothing, of course, is so well calculated to capture a bachelor of forty as a truly new thrill and a thrill moreover so truly innocent. Tarbox was for the moment helpless under the unwonted sensation and the force of it multiplied until it took on the proportions of a brainstorm. You couldn't call it less because nothing less would account for what came to pass. Tarbox felt the trustful touch of Lucile's soft, little warm hand and the next he knew—at all clearly she was in his lap.

But that wasn't the most astonishing part. The most astonishing part was the way he gave up and became virtually somebody else. The transformation met with no resistance on his part. It was too much fun. Wheat going up a cent when he was long or down a cent when he was short—these were fun of a sort, but nothing to the fun of having Lucile's wriggly little body in his arms and her restless hands clawing at his face.

The woman couldn't stop talking—at least she didn't. "I was just wondering," she prattled, in the manner of simplicity, "how I should manage. I expected to find infants' food for sale here in the station but I don't, that is, the kind I want. I must have some and now I can leave Lucile with you while I go out and see about it. I thought I should have to take her with me and she's such a trouble, so heavy to carry and so awkward to walk far. If you don't mind? It won't take me ten minutes, I know, and she'll not miss me in that time. I never knew such a child as she is to make up with strangers. If she were bothersome I shouldn't think of asking you. You'll not mind—for ten minutes?"

Tarbox didn't mind; wonder of wonders he didn't mind.

"Lucile stay while mamma goes away?" the woman coaxed.

"Da, da!" assented Lucile, enthusiastically. For a moment Tarbox was bleakly stricken with a fear lest the baby be unwilling and when she showed by every token that she wasn't the uplift was positively enormous. Wheat might have jumped ten points yet had no such effect upon him.

Uplift, and still more uplift. Tarbox came down to earth long enough to discover that his train had gone without him, and straightway went back up so far as not to care a fig.

It didn't seem long, anyway not at first. At first indeed, the time fairly flew. Tarbox was troubled by nothing unless it should be the thought of the woman coming back, and even that didn't

trouble him very much. His joy was too fierce to tolerate any sort of cloud, like the sun burning up the vapors that float across its face. As for the departure of the woman's train, which would be the end of everything, he absolutely refused to think of it.

The seventh heaven of bliss, or the seventieth, if there be any such, where no time is, only an eternity of joy—that was where Tarbox dwelt for the most part. But the big clock stared him persistently in the face and he was somehow made conscious, all at once, that the woman had been gone half an hour. There stuck in his memory a picture of the clock as it had looked when the woman, in her simplicity, asked him if he knew what time it was, a picture of the hands with the long hand almost straight up. It was straight down now.

Half an hour. Why should it take the woman half an hour to step out and buy some infant's food? She had mentioned ten minutes. She would be gone, she had declared, not more than ten minutes. What did she mean by staying half an hour?

It was thirty-five minutes before he finished wondering why it should be half an hour. Forty minutes—forty-five; the time didn't fly so fast now but it kept slipping away. And still the woman didn't come back.

Not until the long hand marked off forty-five minutes did Tarbox permit himself to indulge the suspicion that the woman had gone away with the deliberate intention of never coming back. Although as a man acquainted with the devious ways of the world he knew that women did leave their babies with strangers in that fashion and go away and never come back, he didn't permit himself to indulge the suspicion until forty-five minutes had passed; that was as soon as he dared. But when the hand reached the quarter he let himself go, as it were, and fell into the most extraordinary mixture of sensations and sentiments.

Had the woman indeed gone away with the intention of never coming back? He hoped so.

Slowly, as if the effort of lifting itself were almost too much, the long hand of the clock measured off another quarter. Tarbox counted the ticks and when, after an age, the hand pointed straight up once more, marking the lapse of a solid hour, he could contain himself no longer. "She's not coming!" he exulted.

People came and went. They saw nothing out of the way. A man gathered a baby up in his arms and hurried out of the station. The baby was entirely willing, the man was more than willing, and it didn't seem to be anybody else's business.

Tarbox lost the definite vision of the long hand pointing straight up in a jumble of impressions. He had another brainstorm, in short, and came out of it to find himself, with Lucile in his arms, alighting from a cab at the massive portal of the elegant and exclusive bachelor apartments where he lodged. But if he didn't know exactly what had happened in the meanwhile it was at least clear that luck had favored him.

Nor was he done being favored. Not a soul about the place saw him. It was a fortunate hour; everybody was out except the help and the help were nowhere in sight. Not so much as a stray chambermaid did he encounter. The lift was up the shaft and he didn't trouble it to come down. The stairs looked good to him that day; they weren't especially well lighted and nobody used them.

Lucile kept as still as a mouse. She betrayed the deepest interest in the proceedings but she was not a bit scared. Her little arm rested over his neck, her little fingers clutched at his ear, and the touch of her filled him and thrilled him with a bravery to fight lions rather than give her up.

He was glad no lions presented themselves, however, and he drew a deep breath of relief when at length he got the baby safely landed among the cushions of his easy chair. He was careful, too, to bolt the door behind him. He didn't forget that it was the hour when chambermaids prowled with masterkeys in their hands.

He wanted Lucile to fall asleep but her fancy ran to no such thing. The easy chair was soft and warm and slumberous, but she straightway squirmed down out of it and with unabashed curiosity went seeking what she might find. "She won't sleep till she's been fed," Tarbox reflected. He knew that much about babies, from hearsay; you had to feed them if you wished to put them to sleep.

He ransacked his elegant quarters for playthings and the costly furniture seemed very vain and ineffectual. But whatsoever bid fair in any degree to serve he fetched, reserving nothing—his military brushes with the silver backs, his gold razor with the blade taken out, the burnished chafing dish, bits of jewelry and, last but far from least, the splendid ostrich plume off his Knight Templar hat. Lucile's eyes danced wonderfully when he brought her the plume—it pleased her more than anything.

"The feminine instinct for whatever costs a pile!" commented Tarbox, but not bitterly. Two hours ago, having occasion to quote that time-worn sentiment, he would have given it a contemptuous, not to say spiteful, fling, but he gave it nothing like that now.

Altogether he heaped up quite a mountain of playthings, such as they were, and when Lucile had graciously made herself busy with them, so that she was thoroughly absorbed, he slipped out. He couldn't bolt the door from the outside and that meant some risk of discovery, but he trusted to luck to save the day. He expected to be gone only a few minutes anyway.

There was a drugstore in the next block and he made a bee-line for it. "I want some infants' food," he informed the clerk, and he mentioned the brand which the woman had mentioned. It was on his tongue to say a bottle of infants' food but he bethought himself just in time; he didn't know whether the stuff came in bottles or boxes, wet or dry.

The clerk handed down a package. Tarbox regarded it uncertainly. "This is something new, a new departure for us," he stammered. "Er—how do you feed it?"

"There are full directions inside the wrapper," the clerk replied.

"Do we need—er—any special appliances?" faltered Tarbox.

"How old is your baby?" the clerk inquired.

Tarbox blushed. "Eighteen months," he made answer, guessing desperately.

"A baby that old ought to eat out of a spoon," said the clerk, and, so instructed, Tarbox made a bee-line back to his rooms.

He listened at the door and heard Mistress Lucile cooing contentedly. He went in and found her with the ostrich plume wound about her neck and knotted bulkily under her chin, and surveying herself with the utmost complacency in the polished surface of the chafing dish.

She hadn't missed him, apparently, nevertheless she was glad to see him and even more glad to see the package in his hand. She was acquainted with that kind of package; she knew what it meant. "Goo, goo!" she lisped with hearty approval.

She toddled after him when he went to the bathroom for water and she clung to his leg with eager, upturned face while he prepared the food over the spirit lamp, reading the directions as he went along. His fingers were slow and awkward to achieve results and Lucile grew impatient. She whimpered a little and scared Tarbox a good deal, but after all nothing untoward happened. He got the

food ready and fed it to her out of a solid silver orange spoon, holding her in his lap the while.

She was vastly well suited and laughed up at him continually, and when her hunger was appeased she insisted upon taking the spoon and feeding him. The stuff tasted pretty bad but he swallowed it, to the baby's unbounded delight. She might have kept him eating indefinitely only that she accidentally flirted a spoonful of the messy mixture over herself and him and was so carried away with the effect that she forgot her previous purposes entirely.

He took her back to the bathroom to wash her face and hands and the rushing water caught her fancy. Tarbox perceived the necessity of restraint but before he could muster the courage to cross her it was too late; the mischief was done and she had drenched herself to the skin.

Tarbox surveyed the wet little figure and his heart failed him. He wanted to rush out and summon help, a chambermaid or somebody. Granted that his bungling fingers could undress Lucile, and that was a lot to grant, how should he ever dare?

Nevertheless he dared. He considered what the consequences might be if she weren't undressed forthwith and by that he gained courage to do what was needful. He discovered, on reflection, that he didn't want to summon help. The emergency took on the color of a precious opportunity; he wanted to carry the business through by himself. He fell to work and as he worked his dismay passed. In its stead a great awe came over him. When at last he had Lucile undressed and she lay among the cushions of the big chair, it was as if he stood in the holy of holies.

She yawned prodigiously. Her eyelids fluttered. "Da, da!" she whispered, softly and sleepily, and was wafted away to the sandman's country.

Tarbox sank on his knees beside the chair. His mood was the mood of idolatry. He kissed Lucile's pink foot, very lightly, as idols get themselves kissed by such as worship devoutly. But light though it was his touch tickled her and she kicked him in the face as she slept.

He brought his softest, richest blanket and tucked it tenderly about her. He spread out her clothing to dry, and that done he drew up another chair and sat down to watch over her, to dream waking dreams with Lucile filling them all.

He laid his plans to the last detail; he knew at last exactly what he should do with her. Of course he couldn't keep her there in his apartments though the yearning to do so fiercely obtruded itself upon all his prudent counsels. No, he would keep her with him only to-day. To-morrow he would take her to the convent and give her over to the care of the gentle sisters there. They would do their best for Lucile—as well, no doubt, as anyone could do. He didn't intend to abandon the baby to them, far from it. She should still be his as she was nobody else's. He would be a father to her and as good a father as in him lay, ministering to her as he might, watching over her always. Hitherto he had lived for himself. Henceforth he should live for her.

Once more he knelt beside the easy chair, as at a shrine. He touched Lucile's warm lips with his own, and she lifted her hand in her sleep and laid it against his face. His eyes swam with tears. When had he shed real tears before? "Life—how little have I known it until to-day!" he exclaimed.

WHEN Tarbox heard the janitor drop the morning paper at his door his first thought was that he didn't care whether he read it or not, so completely was his outlook changed overnight. Ordinarily he would have reached out and got the paper before he dressed, to scan it eagerly, especially the page where the

news about wheat was assembled, but to-day, though the Hessian fly should have devastated every field from Canada to Texas, it signified nothing to Tarbox.

Nevertheless he went and got the paper. He glanced at the headlines as he came back with it, indifferently. But right away his indifference vanished, for about the first headlines he encountered were these:

WOMAN ROBBED OF BABY
IN UNION STATION

He read attentively enough after that —breathlessly, in fact:

"Mrs. Condon Edwards, of Oklahoma City, left her baby with a strange man at the Union Station yesterday, while she went to purchase some infants' food, and upon her return she could find neither baby nor man.

"She expected to be gone only a few minutes but she didn't like the appearance of the places near the station and perceiving that the cars ran through Market Street very frequently she yielded to the temptation to go further. She boarded a car and went as far as Twelfth Street, where she found what she wanted and started back. But on the way a heavy truck stalled across the track and held up traffic so long that Mrs. Edwards became worried and decided to walk. It was only a short distance but she somehow went astray and when she finally reached the station more than an hour had elapsed.

"Mrs. Edwards at once notified the police. She describes the man as being dressed in fashion and of cultivated manners. The police have so far been unable to find any trace of him or the baby."

Out of the wreck of his dreams, figuratively speaking, Tarbox lifted his diminished head and saw his duty plain.

But even forty years do not necessarily extinguish that quality of youth whereby the wreck of dreams gets itself rehabilitated. Almost at once Tarbox began to build anew. The vision of the woman came back to him. He saw, in his mind's eye, her widow's weeds. The telltale pathos in her voice touched him afresh.

"Why not?" he asked himself, though but yesterday he wouldn't have married for the world.

He dressed the baby, not dawdling over the task as he would like to have done but with grim haste—dressed her and called a cab and took her to police headquarters. He held her in his arms all the way and all the way he felt the tie between them strengthen. For Lucile's sake he would do anything.

At the door of headquarters he met the woman coming out. She looked very wan and woeful and ready to faint, and a man was supporting her with his arms familiarly about her.

That was where the castle of dreams definitely collapsed. No quality of youth or anything else could save it in the face of what happened in the next minute or so, and the long and short of it was that the woman snatched Lucile and hugged her frantically while the man hugged them both in a manner to show that he had a good right.

The woman inventoried the baby swiftly. "Mercy! Her frock is on backwards," she exclaimed, and gave Tarbox a terrible look.

It wasn't so terrible, though, as the look the man give him. "You ought to be in jail and if it wasn't for the notoriety we'd put you there!" he told Tarbox, and with that they went their way.

Lucile was perfectly perfidious. She never so much as glanced back. "Da, da!" she cooed, delightedly, and clasped her hands tightly about the man's neck.

Tarbox went straight and took his train. He had lost twenty-four good hours and he knew perfectly well that his outlook would never be the same.

# THE PERFECT CRIME

*By JAMES HENRY THOMPSON*

IT was easy for Tracy to reach from his corner window the loose board that closed the end nearest him of the cornice projection of the roof. When this board was removed he found a neat, dry and fairly commodious recess.

Tracy had been studying the possibilities of that projecting cornice for many days. He had waited until a quiet hour of night to attempt to remove the short-sawed board that closed the end and that was within such easy reach of his window. He was surprised and delighted at the ease with which the board came away, its nails pulling easily from the distending fibers of the house. The cranny, he discovered, was an ideal hiding place for small articles.

Very quietly and painstakingly, Tracy worked. By prearranged plan, he affixed some strips of wood to the loose board in such a way that they would hold the door of his new-found hiding-place securely and so nicely that no one could detect that it had been tampered with.

Very slowly and carefully, Tracy worked. There were no lights in his room and the night was pitch-dark, so his labor must be done by sense of touch. So noiseless was he that his movements were inaudible to any person passing his door. When he had finished he had ready for use a cabinet perhaps two feet long, a foot wide and six inches deep. Into such a space may be crammed a deal of concentrated value.

When Tracy had completed the arrangement of his cornice cubbyhole he tiptoed from his room and went downstairs, placing his feet very steadily close to the wall of the house so as to avoid any creaking stair treads. With a feather dipped in oil, he treated the lock and hinges of the outer door of the house before he let himself out.

Then Tracy sought the square of the lawn that lay directly underneath the cornice that he had so neatly tampered with. With a small electric torch that emitted a ray no thicker than a pencil's lead he went over every inch of that ground and meticulously picked from the grass every splinter, however minute, that had fallen from his careful operations above.

When he had satisfied himself that no visible trace of his work remained he gathered up the bits of wood and walked three blocks distant, where he carefully dropped the chips and slivers into the grated manhole of a sewer. Then he returned to his room, taking few pains to avoid noise, and switched on the lights.

He washed his hands and scraped from under his finger nails any particles that had gathered there while he was arranging the cell in the cornice.

Tracy next unlocked a large steel locker and took from it a generous-sized book whose pages were covered with closely-written notes, and seated himself in a comfortable attitude for reading.

The room in which Tracy had composed himself for an evening of reading was equipped as the retreat of a student might be. Cases of books lined the walls, sturdy volumes in calf and scholarly tomes, ranging in democratic neighborliness with paper-backed pamphlets and gaudily and cheaply bound novels. The

big steel locker, whose doors stood open, was filled with indexed drawers for filing. Everything was neat and orderly.

Inspection of the library would have quickly determined the bent of its owner's bibliomania. Every volume on the shelves had for its subject some phase of crime. Cesare Lombroso's erudite studies shouldered a set of Gaboriau, and stolid reports of penologists stood side by side with Nick Carter's nimble fancies. There were Poe and Dumas and Doyle, Ainsworth and Green; The Criminal Mind and The Psychology of Crime rubbed against the latest detective story; every sort of book that dealt with crime, from the weightiest digests to the most frivolous of fiction; bound volumes of the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, and scores of reports of trials.

Tracy sat underneath his reading lamp, a studious figure, small and with that curious stooped intenseness that comes to them who persistently follow a hobby. His thick-lensed spectacles did not conceal the seriousness of his eyes, and the deep lines of thought that marked his broad forehead were brands of abstract concentration.

He pored over the closely-written notes, and from time to time jotted down upon a convenient pad references and notations. He arose and searched through the files of the steel cabinet and took therefrom an envelope closely covered with methodical writing, and from it, in turn, took a neatly-folded newspaper clipping. His scrutiny of the clipping was followed by the insertion of more notes in his closely-written book.

From a heap of newspapers that lay upon the floor, Tracy then began sorting and reading. He clipped such items as caught his interest, and when he had read every one of the journals and accumulated a considerable pile of clippings on the table, he began the work of assorting and placing them in envelopes ready for filing with the mass already in the steel cabinet.

It was late when he finished his task and locked the doors of the steel filing case. Tracy then deliberately and wearily climbed into bed.

In that apocryphal classification of men's purposes and ambitions—the city directory—Tracy was listed as a clerk. Because that title has lost all of its scholarly significance, he was hastily dumped into that great class who may perform anything from selling pins to casting up the accounts of epochal events.

Had a curious one followed the directory's meager directions he would have found Hobart Tracy shut behind the bronze grill of a bank's cage, locked in a mahogany-fitted cell and laboring all day long at the tedious task of counting other people's money. The bills and the coins had little meaning to him, no more than the counters of the abacus upon which a Chinese laundryman computes his accounts.

There were no bookshelves nor big steel cabinets in the bronzed cell where Tracy worked, nothing there to interfere with the industry with which he counted other people's money. The compiler of the directory therefore seized upon these external evidences of employment and labeled him a clerk, overlooking in the ignorance that possesses compilers of directories the particularity of passion that was the man's real profession. Had the directory man been qualified to see the wonderful system of pigeonholes and filing cases and notebooks with which the clerk's brain was outfitted he might have made a more exact classification of Tracy's purpose in life.

For Hobart Tracy was a criminologist, a student of crime and criminals, an analyst, a scientist; and from the depths of his mania he had dug a theory that later resolved himself into a plan, that in turn became an action, that became this story.

One night at the boarding house table Tracy expounded wisely some of his theories about crime.

The discussion began when Mr. Bladgren, the insurance agent, commented on the latest murder mystery, an apparently inexplicable puzzle that was just then occupying the complete attention of the police and the divided attention of the newspapers.

"There don't seem to be a single clue," remarked Mr. Bladgren, tritely and with the banality of a man seeking to open conversation.

"There must be a clue if they could only find it," said Miss McLaughlin, a stenographer for a firm of lawyers, thereby unconsciously voicing the truism that is the bugbear of police and detectives. She turned to Tracy.

"Don't you think there's always a perfectly obvious clue to every crime, Mr. Tracy?" she asked, smiling prettily.

Tracy looked up from his task of dissecting a particularly tough joint of chicken. He peered through the thick lenses of his spectacles and corrugated his forehead.

"There is always a perfectly obvious clue to every ordinary crime," he said. "The perfect crime has not yet been committed, or if it has been committed its very perfection has kept it a secret. Someday a man who can foresee all difficulties and eventualities, and can think clearly and calmly enough to eliminate all possibilities of detection, will commit such a crime and give his experiences to the public, thus setting at rest a long dispute among criminologists."

Tracy had been almost tempted to say "we criminologists." He spoke with the eager seriousness of a man with a hobby who finds opportunity to exploit and discuss the subject upon which he knows himself to be an authority.

"I have read that criminals possess the shrewdest minds of any class," said Mr. Bladgren. "Why, then, should they make such blunders as lead to their detection?"

"Because they labor under stress of excitement and with their minds divided between their purpose and its results," replied Tracy. "They are either overcome by passion or fear or too great concern. When the mind is thus possessed it cannot focus accurately upon possibilities."

Tracy's logic rather gave Mr. Bladgren a headache, but he pursued the topic doggedly. "Then no criminal may ever hope to commit a crime that shall leave no clue?" he asked.

"I believe it is impossible for the purely criminal mind, or a mind possessed of malice or greed or necessity or any of the other motives that propel toward ordinary crimes to plan and execute a crime that cannot be detected," lectured Tracy, forgetting the tough chicken joint and the rest of the dinner.

"Could a person not a criminal and not driven by any of the motives you mention, plan and execute a crime impossible of detection?" asked Mr. Bladgren.

"I believe such a crime is possible," said Tracy. "The cool and dispassionate brain of a man absolutely unconcerned in anything except the perfection of the crime he is about to commit may so plan and execute his designs that he shall leave no clue behind."

"It is usually some trivial circumstance that reveals the guilt of a criminal, is it not?" pursued the insurance agent.

"In the analysis and classification of thousands of cases that I have made I have found that more than ninety-five per cent have been solved as the result of acts that might easily have been avoided had their perpetrator taken sufficient forethought," announced Tracy.

"Oh, I think crime is the most fascinating subject!" exclaimed Miss McLaughlin.

"There is nothing more beautiful than a beautiful crime," quoted Mr. Tracy, now completely unaware of the purpose for which he had come to the table. "The world is becoming too utilitarian to appreciate the beauty of crime. There

were times when criminals were splendid characters, intelligent, heroic, resourceful and honored. They were witty, suave, decorous, daring and diverting. Qualities of that high order seem to have disappeared from criminals in these times, and our so-called criminal class is made up of uncouth and unintelligent thugs, without sufficient imagination to conceive or sufficient ingenuity to execute crimes that command admiration."

Miss McLaughlin leaned over her plate in rapt admiration. "Oh, tell us some more," she urged.

"The fine spirit of the old criminals is lacking now," continued Tracy, oblivious of the girl's flattering eagerness. "Criminals no longer enjoy the esteem of the people. Their romance and traditions have deparated."

"There were Hernani and Fra Diavolo, Robin Hood and Corocotta, who claimed an emperor's reward for his own head and squandered it with Lalage and Lydia," said Tracy, dreaming behind his thick-lensed spectacles. "Jack Sheppard contributed much to the entertainment of the town, we are told in old chronicles, and persons of distinction sat at his manacled feet and listened to tales of his prowess.

"There was bold and gallant Dick Turpin and Claude Duval, who was honored after his execution by a body guard of gentlemen of rank; and Cartouche, a wicked wit and practical joker, who corrected the grammar of his own death warrant and turned his thieving into a great industry.

"The old annals of crime are full of cases to my point. Modern reports are mere sordid accounts of the errors of puerile minds. Crime to-day is not given the careful attention it deserves, else we might have more cases wherein a clue is difficult to find. This also accounts for the dulled wit that suffices to qualify for the police department.

"But someday there will come the man who can go about a crime with intelligent thought and he will bring back the days of romance and perform the perfect crime to which there shall be no clue and that shall be touched with romance and skill."

"Oh, Mr. Tracy, why don't you try it?" asked the impetuous stenographer.

"Perhaps I shall some day," promised the criminologist whom the directory dubbed a clerk.

In his room Tracy went about his daily habit of clipping from the newspapers every story of crime they contained. Only the cases that were chronicles of arrest and detection went into the filing envelopes; the other reports were assorted and laid away to await their sequels. Tracy was concerned only in cases that had failed of purpose inasmuch as their authors had been detected.

In his note book he wrote:

"The perfect crime by the very fact of its perfection must always be anonymous."

With his clippings the criminologist busied himself through the evening. In every instance where an arrest had been made he made a careful scrutiny of details to determine just what inadvertence of preparation or execution had left the clue that led to apprehension. These causes of failure he noted on his filing envelopes and later in tabular form in the big closely-written book.

In this manner the clerk had compiled a complete index to thousands of crimes; an index that revealed in every instance the fatal error or carelessness that had led to the detection of the criminal. He knew to a certainty the weak spots in the plans, the mental quirks and the inescapable reactions of mind that so often betray a culprit, and had tabulated all the trivialities that had confounded scores of schemers.

From his collection of causes of failure Tracy had grown accustomed to reason inversely and to conceive a crime that should have none of the weaknesses that had marred all these failures. It

was inevitable that the man's constant pondering over such a project should leave in his brain a mania to perform the perfect crime.

So Hobart Tracy, bank clerk, mild mannered and blameless of life, myopic and studious, essentially a scientist and a scholar, went about his plans for his perfect crime, careless of profits and not actuated by greed or malice or revenge or urged by necessity. He was merely to put his theory to a test, to prove that intelligence may overcome circumstances and that forethought may prevent chance of detection.

The heroes of Ainsworth and Lever, those romantic creations of a day when swashbuckling cavalier brigands mixed their arts of knavery and knightliness, filled his brain. He chose highway robbery as the particular crime that he would perfect, partially because he had an inherent gentleness and timidity that forbade any more brutal deed and because such a crime savors of romance, and, too, may be made picturesque in details. Then, he argued, such a crime presents difficulties because of the public nature of the places in which it must be committed, and the perfect crime must be one of formidable difficulties.

With the selection of his mode of crime, there remained only the arrangement of details and the choice of a victim. Over these things Tracy labored for many evenings, setting down in a new note book the minutiae of the plans he formulated.

Over and over he considered every step that was to lead to the climax of his deed. He eliminated and expurgated, improved and added to, debated and catalogued, all the machinery he was to use, and by frequent reference to his library and clippings he built up a composite scheme of action that partook of the strength and eliminated the weaknesses of the greatest fictional and actual crimes ever recorded.

At the boarding house table his enthusiasm for his hobby was communicated to his companions, and they freely discussed the traits of criminals and the niceties of crime at every meal. Particularly was Miss McLaughlin impressed with the theory that a perfect crime might be evolved.

"Has there ever been a crime to which there has been absolutely no clue?" she repeated.

"Many of them," replied Tracy. "I have my doubts, however, whether this is due to the criminal ingenuity or the dullness of the men set to catch the criminal. For instance, in Hearne's Diaries, the curious old newspapers of 1723, we read that in that year highwaymen waylaid on the road to Paris a party of English travelers and murdered six, and although the Regent d'Orleans offered large rewards for their apprehension, none was ever caught and charged with the crime."

Such bits of knowledge gained by Tracy in his reading, whether exactly to the point in discussion or not, gained for him an awesome respect in the boarding house, and he took immense delight in quoting such stray bits of information.

"There must be many records of attempts to perform the perfect crime," said Mr. Bladgren.

"The instances are innumerable, both in fact and fiction," replied Tracy. "The theme of the perfect crime has been a favorite with writers of detective and mystery stories for many years. In fact, the assumption of an unsolvable crime is the basis of every good detective story. However, any such crime essentially must be unknown. The very revelation of its workings would defeat its purpose, except as its author revealed details as a contribution to criminal science."

"Then there may have been thousands of perfect crimes of which we know nothing," commented Miss McLaughlin, who was becoming rather wearied with the involved turn of the discussion.

"I do not believe that is true, because investigation and classification of the criminal mind and its weaknesses reveals a startling lack of intelligence and ingenuity that seems to preclude any such perfection of detail, and fortunately more intellectual persons are seldom addicted to or propelled toward crime," said Tracy.

"But, you, Mr. Tracy? If you went about it to commit a perfect crime, it would be only from motives of scientific research. You have the ideal equipment for such a crime," urged the stenographer.

"Perhaps so," half assented Tracy. "Certainly the knowledge you all have of my predilections would render any attempt on my part to perfect a crime and avoid detection doubly difficult."

Thereafter the slightest hint of mystery in any current offense against law and order threw the suspicions of the boarding-house table toward Tracy.

The criminologist clerk's classification of the flaws that had marred the knavery of others was assurance to him that he was fortified against such errors. So certain was he of success in his adventure that he prepared the cornice cubbyhole to receive the fruits of his robbery.

On the flyleaf of the notebook wherein he had set down the details of his proposed enterprise, Tracy wrote one of the ten maxims of Jonathan Wild, the thief-taker who turned thief:

"Never do more mischief than is absolutely necessary for success."

The little man whose hobby had led him into so strange a purpose shrank from the physical features of what he was to do and morally quailed with his natural dislike of lawbreaking; but his passion drove him on, and when he was caught in the enthusiasm of his processes of planning he forgot scruples and trepidations.

Unconsciously, perhaps, he utilized some of the knowledge gained in his bank cell. He knew the details accompanying the preparation of payrolls for many patrons of the bank, and on one in particular he fastened his intentions. This particular payroll it was the custom of the bank to deliver to a messenger on Saturday afternoons after the regular banking hours, and after the time when Tracy was accustomed to be released from his cage and was free to go about his own affairs.

The money that was counted and prepared for the wages of the employees of the Monarch Works was always packed in a leather bag, and the messenger, with whom Tracy had passed many pleasant words, came for it at exactly three o'clock each Saturday afternoon.

For many Saturdays, Tracy watched the movements of the messenger, once meeting him as though casually and walking all the way from the bank to the factory with him. He knew that it was the messenger's habit to take a time-saving course through a little-frequented alley, with a sharp turn and two tributary alleys, and that in that isolated alley there was little danger of interruption should a footpad decide to operate there.

When the day that he had set for the perfect crime had arrived, Tracy had sifted and sorted facts and possibilities until it seemed to him there could be no flaw anywhere in his calculations. He was certain that he had only to contend with indeterminate events that must be met and handled on the spur of the moment. He had made a list of these possibilities and mapped a course of action for each eventuality.

Came the day set for his strategy, Tracy left the bank at his customary hour, ate his lunch at the usual place, and shortly after three o'clock was established near the unfrequented alley, which he had reached after a series of mysterious visits to widely-separated portions of the city.

The potential footpad was strangely different from the dapper little bank clerk. His clothes were baggy and much

worn, his hands and face were grimed, and without the thick-lensed spectacles his face was altered. The psychological change in the man affected his physiognomy, and in place of the studious, mild-mannered clerk there stood a vulpine, crafty, unscrupulous knave. Tracy knew that his best disguise would lie in the confused senses with which his victim would view him.

So when the messenger came through the alley, promptly on schedule, the heavy leather bag dragging at his arm, Tracy was ready for him, calm and secure in the adequacy of his prevision.

The new-born highwayman stepped quietly behind the messenger, threw a heavy grain sack over his head, a noosed rope over his arms, tripped him and in a trice had him blinded, gagged and bound, deprived of any means of protest or alarm. Tracy had practised this process in his room until he performed with the proficiency of a professor of legerdemain.

He rolled the helpless messenger to a comfortable position, and in the seclusion of one of the side alleys emptied the contents of the leather bag into a cheap fiber-board suitcase. Then he strolled boldly and in no haste to the street.

A trolley car bore Tracy many blocks distant to a tenement neighborhood, where he had rented a room some days before. There he changed his clothes, this time to a shoddy suit of plaids, and shifted the burden of the suitcase to a black imitation leather bag. He replaced his heavy brogans with lighter shoes and then washed the grime from his face and picked and peeled from his hands the heavy coating of collodion that lay underneath the grease and dirt.

Again Tracy took to the streets, this time walking some eight blocks distant to a tailor shop whose sign indicated the proprietor's readiness to clean and press clothing while his customers waited.

To the Semitic tailor, Tracy expressed his desire for a suit left several days before, and announced that he would change behind the curtain, leaving his present garb for rejuvenation.

The criminologist left the tailor shop attired in a suit of cheap blue serge.

At a better-grade haberdasher's shop in another far-removed section of the city, Tracy left the blue serge suit to be called for later and donned a modest gray outfit purchased many days before and in the custody of the clothier during alterations.

In an obscure hotel, Tracy went to the room where he had lodged the night before and again changed his clothes. This time he came forth in every detail exactly as he habitually appeared.

In the room he set down the cheap black bag with a sigh of relief, for its weight had been a great strain upon his flaccid arms. From it he took three oblong packages, thick and flexible as are packages of banknotes, and placed them in another bag along with the blue serge suit and his other belongings. He paid little attention to the paper-wrapped cylinders that nearly filled the black bag.

Tracy knew that the bulk of small silver coins was deceptive and that its great weight was no indication of worth. His training as a bank clerk had taught him contempt for anything except the bills that concentrated into small compass a deal of value.

At the hotel desk he paid his bill and departed, refusing a bellhop's offer to carry his bags.

Then Tracy started to walk across the river bridge that separated the part of the town he was in from the neighborhood of his boarding house. In the dusk of early evening and the hurry of the homegoing hour, his insignificant figure attracted little attention, and when he stopped in the middle of the bridge to rest his bags the pedestrians hurrying by passed him without notice. With his foot he pushed the black bag through the cast-iron ornamental railing of the bridge and in a moment heard it splash

into the deep water below. Then he picked up the lighter bag and continued his way to the boarding house.

Once in his room, Tracy reached from the corner window and placed the three oblong packages in the cornice cubbyhole. Then he sat down with his notebook and carefully checked off every item of his crime, assuring himself that no lapse of memory had disarranged any feature of his plans.

Tracy was in a warm glow of success. He was confident that he had committed a crime without leaving a clue. He had proven his theory.

To the man unversed in criminology or less expert in analysis of crime than Tracy, the precautions he had taken and the seemingly childish attempts to destroy clues may appear puerile and inexpert. But Tracy knew that artlessness is the very soul of art. Too much care to avoid attention defeats its own purpose, and so he had combined in his scheme of action a finely-conceived and greatly-considered course of clumsy artifices and clever ruses, relying on the paradoxical series of acts to bewilder and confuse any who might attempt to follow his devious trail. The superlative finesse of his scheme lay in its apparent simplicity. Should any detective stumble upon his trail he must soon lose it, because it did not follow long after the same pattern. Tracy knew the stubbornness with which the detective mind follows a theory.

His landlady knew the hotel where he had lodged—he was registered there under his own name—and knew that he had been absent from the boarding house, because he wished to attend a lecture upon Criminal Instincts and later a dinner of the Prison Reform Society, events at which he had actually been present. There the trail would come to a blind ending.

Tracy was much pleased as he finished checking up the items in his notebook and wrote down there:

"No criminal need fear detection if he is provided with intelligent ingenuity and a carefulness of preparation that precludes any accidental alteration of his plans."

The criminologist clerk slept soundly that night and retired so completely satisfied with the successful operation of his criminal machinery that he gave no thought to the three oblong packages snugly concealed in the cubbyhole.

At the breakfast table, where bulky Sunday newspapers were propped in front of every plate, Tracy's late arrival created no more interest than usual. The boarders were too much concerned with oatmeal and news to discuss his hobby.

Suddenly Mr. Bladgren looked up from his paper.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "Here's a crime without a clue. Maybe it's the perfect crime we've been talking about!"

"What is it?" asked Tracy with unconcern.

"Messenger with the payroll of the Monarch Works bound and gagged and robbed of $12,000," summarized Mr. Bladgren. "Done in isolated alley, and he didn't see the robber because he had a sack over his head. Police say there is not a clue to be found, not even a fingerprint on the leather bag from which the money was taken."

"Interesting, but not unusual," said Tracy between sips of coffee. "Such a crime is very simple to commit without detection."

"Oh, Mr. Tracy, you didn't do it, did you?" anxiously asked Miss McLaughlin.

"If I did and there are no clues, I may safely lay claim to having accomplished a perfect crime, may I not?" enigmatically answered the clerk.

Mr. Bladgren smiled. "Tracy's crimes will all be in his brain, I guess," he said.

That night, Hobart Tracy requested the hand of Miss McLaughlin in marriage and was accepted. He had awaited the time when he could venture upon the

matrimonial seas, but only now, with the three oblong packages safe in his clever hiding-place, was he equipped for the voyage.

And, mind you, Hobart Tracy had not stolen so that he might marry. The possibilities that the three oblong packages opened up came as an after-effect. His crime was too far abstracted from venality for that; it was a contribution to science, a tribute to his hobby. But its consequences might be applied to a good purpose. Why not? He had accomplished the greatest desire of his heart, done the thing that qualified him as an expert, and like so many others who have pledged fealty to a hobby, he was now ready to devote his time to other matters. As for the three oblong packages up there in the cornice, what better use could he make of them than to provide a home for two?

At Monday morning's breakfast, Mr. Tracy and Miss McLaughlin were very beaming and very blushing. They announced their engagement with eager pride, and were the objects of much banter and much good-humored jesting.

Mr. Bladgren asked if Mr. Tracy would continue his studies in criminology, and Miss McLaughlin answered very promptly, "Of course he will. Some day, maybe, he'll figure out the perfect crime."

"I can't take risks any more," promised Tracy.

"By the way," said Mr. Bladgren, "that hold-up is still a mystery. Looks like it might be the perfect crime so far as leaving any clues goes. But there is a chance to catch the highwayman yet, for he will have trouble in disposing of his loot."

Tracy shifted slightly and uneasily, and with much interest asked, "How's that?"

"Why, it seems that the money for the Monarch Works was all in gold. The firm was celebrating its golden anniversary on Saturday and had a funny idea of paying off in gold to mark the occasion."

Mr. Tracy looked toward Miss McLaughlin and paled around the lips.

"The paper says," continued Mr. Bladgren, "that the messenger's bag held nothing but gold and some small silver and three packages of canceled checks that the bank was returning with the firm's newly-balanced books."

Hobart Tracy, criminologist clerk, left the dining room with the excuse that he felt faint. In his room he sat down with his notebook and wrote therein:

"The laws of chance preclude the possibility of accurate foresight; therefore, no crime may be called perfect until all its results are known."

x

Quart and pint-size hip pockets are to adorn men's trousers. A pocket the size of a four-ounce bottle will be sufficient for most of us.—*Detroit Free Press.*

# TAINTED MONEY

*By JOHN D. SWAIN*

THE house before which the little old man paused, differed in no outward respect from others above and below it, or across the street.

Its heavy panelled door bore the numeral "41" in bronze figures. Otherwise, it was like number 43, or 39, or 139. It stood on a quiet street of opulent homes interspersed with occasional clubs, and dominated by the Gothic spire of a church three blocks below.

The silent man who opened to him, first scanned his features through a peep hole cunningly hidden from the outside and then threw the heavy guard chain.

He was barely able to read and write, this Cerberus of Number 41, but he possessed that rare gift of successful detectives, head waiters and gambling house lookouts: he never forgot a face he had once scrutinized, and the ravages of time, barbers or dissipation deceived him not. He remembered at once that the little old man had been vouched for here about six months previously, and he greeted him with his invariable "Good-evening, sir!" which was the sole remark most of the patrons had ever heard issue from his lips.

He varied the accent only, stressing "evening" to those who entered, and "good" to the speeding guest. Names never were uttered by him. By and large, he was a valuable man, worth every dollar of the three thousand he was said to draw.

The House of Chance was known, from the Gold Coast of San Francisco to its namesake of Harvard, as a resort where the elect could obtain a square deal with a square meal thrown in. Vintage wines were opened at its buffet, and vintage canvases hung upon its walls. Its guests could wander at will about the sumptuous rooms, read undisturbed the de luxe volumes from Chance's celebrated *index librorum expurgatorium*, or disport themselves in any known game from *les petits chevaux* to Old Sledge.

It is a fact that all gamblers who are able to conduct their temples of fortune with the elaborate ritual which prevailed at Billy Chance's, are reputed to be "square." Who can conceive of a crooked wheel spinning beneath a genuine Whistler?

Yet it was in this very place that old Joe Rivers, the trapper, had been neatly trimmed of his last fifty dollars.

He remembered the details vividly. He had come to town with a case of muskrat, red fox, coon and other humble skins which comprised the bulk of three month's labor, and with the proceeds of which he had started out to enliven the town, after the time-honored custom of his kind.

Some man-about-town whom he had met in some place or other had conferred the doubtful favor of introducing him to Billy Chance's place. Here he had enjoyed himself as never before. If he were dead, this was the sort of place he felt he would love to go to. A genial black butler in spotless white linen had removed savory chafing covers, pressed upon him marvellous salads and imported chutneys, with bubbling wine from frosty bottles. There were trays of hors d'œuvres whose names and flavors were strange to him, steaming Mocha with

pots of clotted cream, tureens of pâté de foie gras and crystal bowls of Russian caviare set in cakes of ice.

After eating as much as he could, which was considerable, Rivers had dallied with various slot games, amused himself with the little horses skimming about their miniature track beneath a glass dome, and finally drifted into a game of poker with his new-found friend, four strangers and one of Chance's cappers.

"Chance and me is both sportsmen," as Joe expressed it. "I skin muskrats, and Chance skinned me!"

It wasn't the loss of the fifty dollars, it was the coarse way in which it was done that rankled. Joe Rivers reckoned that he'd had his money's worth before he sat into the game. And he had his ticket home, with plenty of grub in the little cabin in the woods.

A jack pot it was, and a good one, with Joe's last blue in it. The winner, Chance's house man, beat out his hand with four little deuces. What hurt was that Joe had discarded a deuce in drawing. His gentle protest ignored, he had meekly announced himself as cleaned, and left the place, to sit up the remainder of the night in the railway station, waiting for the morning train back home. He hadn't even a nickel left for a cup of coffee, and it was not until he reached his little cabin late in the afternoon that he had anything to eat. However, to a trapper, this was no unusual hardship.

Ever since, in the deep silence of the woods, he had pondered how to get even. It was no problem to be solved off hand. Few men ever enjoyed such protection as did Billy Chance in his heyday. The town was wide-open, to begin with; and he paid liberal tribute to the police. The party in power lived by graft, and owned the mayor, a majority of the board of aldermen, the district attorney and enough of the local magistrates to kill any indictment short of murder, if even this reservation be granted. More than half of the leading newspapers played safe.

From time to time the clergy thundered, civic leagues organized campaigns, petitions were gotten up, complaints entered; all to drop into the bottomless well of oblivion. The mass of influential taxpayers were satisfied with a polite efficiency which nailed burglars and pickpockets and confidence men almost before they had left the trainshed, a system which kept open vice segregated and left those so disposed to go as far as they pleased after closing hours, and an easy boss running municipal affairs. And Billy Chance as an institution was backed by every duly constituted authority to the limit, and patronized by the very men entrusted with the enforcement of law, and by the wealthy scions of such aristocracy as the town boasted.

Joe Rivers, poor, unknown, ignorant and without influence of any sort, intended to avenge himself against this seemingly impregnable institution; and as he was a peaceable, law-abiding fellow, he proposed to do it without resort to violence. And now, his plans methodically worked out through toilsome days visiting his traps and long, still nights while he smoked his pipe before his log fire, he found himself nodding pleasantly to the doorman and trudging up the soft carpeted stairs to that upper room where he had been so crudely skinned in a game he played particularly well, but always fairly.

He affected nothing of the backwoodsman in his attire. He wore neither gaudy mackinaw nor were his trousers tucked into his boots. He had had his hair cut and his shoes shined, and was clad in a loose, dark-blue serge suit, than which nothing is more anonymous. He was conspicuous in no way save that, the season being Winter, he wore no overcoat, the sheltered city two hundred miles below his hunting ground seeming mild and balmy to him.

As he entered the first room of the

gambling suite, no one paid him any attention save that the floorman politely invited him to have some refreshment, which he mildly refused, and allowed that he would look about him for a bit.

More than half the men present, and they were a goodly number, were in evening clothes. There was, however, quite a sprinkling of visitors in street attire, and even two or three lumber jacks dressed to type. Billy Chance demanded two characteristics of those introduced to his place. They must have money, and they mustn't start anything. Granting these, the house was theirs. They could gamble or not, as they chose. Against the rare contingency of a rough house, there was the suave bouncer, an ex-heavy-weight wrestler. And the lookout man, who circulated with miraculous self-effacement from room to room, packed the most improved type of automatic. But no habitué had ever set eyes upon it.

Billy himself was rarely seen. He never played except with a chosen few in a private room, or with some unusually plunging prospect, but remained mostly in his cozy little office at the end of the suite, with a desk phone connecting by soft buzzers with all departments of his establishment. He was a man of the iron-gray type of dignity. It was said of him that he would discuss Renaissance Art with a man, or shoot him dead, with equal urbanity; and this was probably true. He never indulged in profanity, and rarely in liquor.

To him, after wandering idly about for a few moments, Joe Rivers requested an attendant to conduct him; and as he was not closeted with anyone at the time, the little old trapper was at once ushered into the private office, and at Chance's courteous invitation seated himself in a beguiling leather chair by the desk.

"What is your pleasure?" asked the host, fixing him with a pair of wonderfully keen eyes beneath shaggy gray brows.

The little old man gazed back from childishly frank eyes, and smiled.

"It's this way, Mr. Chance," he said deprecatingly. "My name is Joe Rivers. Back about six months ago, on June twenty-third to be acc'rate, I was trimmed in this here place for fifty dollars. I hain't felt right about it sence, an' I come here to-night to git satisfaction!"

No change of expression crossed the gambler's face.

"Be good enough to tell me the details," he said in a soothing voice.

"Well, 'twas a game of poker; jack pots, with seven of us settin' in. I'd had a right pleasant evenin', and good treatment, an' when I was flim-flammed so raw like, it sorter soured on me. They was four deuces held against me, and one o' them same deuces I'd discarded along with a loose Queen."

"Do you recall who made up your little party?" the soothing voice requested.

"Well, they was a Smith, an' a Jones, an' a Johnson in it—them I recollect, bein' as they're easy names, sort of. Then there was a man whose name I didn't git, an' a gent name of Wallace who brought me here, an one o' your men they called Eddie. It was him fished my deuce out o' the boneyard."

Chance passed the little man a box of Havanas, and on his refusal, selected one himself and bit off the end before replying.

"Mr. Rivers, I have a reputation worth far more to me as an asset, not to mention any moral aspect, than crookedness could ever earn for me. And yet, from time to time, gentlemen like yourself, perfectly honest in their beliefs, enter some complaint or other. It would be the easiest way to settle all such claims without question. My own disposition would lead me to do so. But just see how fatal it would be to my business! The news would spread fast; others, who had lost heavily, would attempt to recoup themselves by trumping up false charges. I should be ruined in a season! To say

nothing of the fact, which must be obvious to you, that were I to settle even one such demand, it would be equivalent to an admission that unfair play is possible in my house!"

The little man continued to keep his eyes, bright as a chipmunk's, on the grave face of the speaker, with an expression of respectful interest.

"I guess likely that's so, Mr. Chance," he said. "I didn't rightly expect you'd feel like makin' it up to me, an' I dunno but what I'd feel the same way about it if I was in your shoes."

Chance nodded. "I appreciate your reasonable attitude, Mr. Rivers. To show you that I never lightly dismiss a complaint, even when made at so late a date, I am going to summon the man I think you refer to as Eddie."

He pressed a white button with a carefully manicured finger tip; and almost instantly there knocked at the door a sharp-faced lad of possibly twenty-five years, whom Rivers recognized at once.

"Eddie," questioned Chance, "do you recall playing jack pots with this gentleman—Wallace introduced him—on June twenty-third last?"

The sharp-faced one gimleted the old man with eyes set rather too close for comfort, and nodded.

"I don't remember just the date, but 'twas about then I guess," he admitted. "Only time I ever saw him here."

"Mr. Rivers claims that you held four deuces on the last round. Furthermore, he insists that he had discarded a deuce and a queen himself."

Eddie shook his head vigorously.

"I can't remember what I held, Mr. Chance, so long ago in such a small game. But there's nothing to his having discarded anything I did hold. Why, I was dealing myself!"

"That's all, Eddie. You may go," said his employer. When the young man had left, he turned with a smile to Rivers.

"It is the easiest thing in the world to be mistaken about a thing like that. Why, I often forget what my own discard is, and I am supposed to be a professional! It's about all an ordinary man can do to handle the cards he holds."

The trapper sighed, and shook his head.

"I played poker when you must 'a' been rolling hoops, Mr. Chance," he objected. "An' if ever it gits so I can't tell what I discarded and drew to every hand in a game, I'll quit and take up somethin' simple, like mumblety-peg. Well, I just thought I'd give ye a show! Seemed only fair, like. You've got a right hospitable place, an' I didn't want to start nothin' onless I *hed* to."

"Start anything?" repeated Chance, with a sort of deadly softness.

"Surest thing you know! I'm a peaceable man, but I'm no worm! Nobody can roll me for fifty, and no come back."

"I'm deeply sorry to have you say this, Mr. Rivers. Just what, if I may ask, do you propose to *start?*"

"I ain't tippin' my hand," said Rivers, rising to his feet. "But I aim to raise some stink about this, Mr. Chance, let me tell ye! I'm goin' to be the most expensive little he-man that ever riffled a deck in your house. Don't be alarmed! I don't pack no weapons, an' when I leave here I'm goin' right out peaceable, not sayin' a word to nobody. But you'll wish you'd got down on yer marrer bones an' *begged* me to take back the fifty you shook me down fer—and it'll be too late then!"

An angry glitter in the other's eyes, and a convulsive movement, indicated that he was tempted to break a long established rule, and lay violent hands on a guest of the house; but he restrained himself with a harshly expelled breath while Joe Rivers, without a backward glance, opened the door and walked out. Before he had crossed the room, Chance had pressed a buzzer and was whispering to the lookout to give him three minutes' time, and then if he were still on the

premises, to have Olaf throw him downstairs.

The little old man, passing silently through the connecting rooms, knew nothing of this arrangement, nor would he have worried if he had. It was eleven o'clock. Already, he knew, a star feature man from the *Globe* was posted on the street opposite Number 41. He had visited his old friend Clark, night city editor, before coming to Billy Chance's, —Clark who had for three years spent his vacations with him in the woods, and who had promised Joe that if the extraordinary plan he had outlined broke according to schedule, a check for a hundred would be mailed to him by the *Globe* treasurer.

Three minutes, therefore, were more than ample for the woodsman, who did not even have an overcoat to delay him. The plan, which had taken so many months to perfect, required only seconds to carry out. So contented was his smile as he sauntered towards the exit that Leonard, the lookout, followed him with a puzzled frown and wondered why the boss had given him such belligerent instructions.

Just outside the door, Joe Rivers paused, turning back to look into the main room. His hands were thrust into the pockets of his sack coat, and despite his expression of amiable interest, Leonard wondered if he could possibly be carrying a gun—and his own alert fingers closed about the stock of his own, loose in his dinner jacket.

Slowly and cautiously, the old man drew from each pocket a pretty little kitten-like creature. They had evidently been asleep in his coat, and yawned and stretched in his hands, arching their black and white backs.

They had been reared by the trapper, who was the only human being they had ever known. Furthermore, they didn't have the slightest desire to know any others, and their delicate whiskers twitched as unfamiliar aromas smote their nostrils.

Fixing his eyes on the roulette table about which a dozen or more were gathered, the old man gently heaved his little pets through the air. One of them struck a great stack of bank notes and gold before the croupier, the other fell short and shot like a variegated streak for the doorway leading to the room beyond.

Before a voice had been raised, Rivers had closed the door through which he had just come. It was, like all the woodwork of the place, very solid and substantial. From an inside pocket he took a wedge of new hickory, broadening out to a thick butt. Thrusting the thin edge between the door and sill, he drove it home with a tremendous kick. He knew that to open it from within it would be necessary to demolish the door, and he believed that the old doorman below, were he to come up and discover the wedge, would be unable to pluck it out without tools.

So fast had he worked that he was half way downstairs before the uproar within the gambling rooms began. He did not hurry while the doorman watched him descend. The latter, too, heard the muffled sounds above, but his instructions were to remain at his post unless summoned by the buzzer. He looked sharply at Joe Rivers, who nodded amiably as he passed out.

"Good evening, sir!" said the doorman, with the accent on "good."

"How do you know father has been gambling again?" commenced the front-page story in next morning's *Globe*. "Your *nose* knows!"

And the expression took the town by storm. When, some five minutes after Joe Rivers had gone his way, a malodorous crowd surged out of the portals of Number 41, they bore into every quarter of the city a terrific effluvia rare to urban life. In limousines, taxis, trolley cars, on foot—into effete apartment houses, palatial hotels, humble dwellings, outraged flats, penetrated the telltale odor.

# BIG BROTHER

*By JOHN MATTER*

HOF TAYLOR was finding life dull in the late afternoon. If life had been a knife, he could not have cut his finger with it.

"I couldn't nick hot butter," Hof soliloquized, bitterly. "I couldn't stab a jellyfish, I couldn't whittle potatoes, I couldn't rip water with it. My goodness, but life is dull. I was happy when I was truckin' down 'round Lake Street in old Chicago, Illinois, U. S. A., but I didn't have sense enough to know that I was happy; so the happiness didn't do me no good. And now that I'm homesteadin' on the Arctic Circle, I'm unhappy and I have sense enough to know it. But the knowin' don't do me no good."

The wind thrust across the Saskatchewan prairie and worried the corners of Hof Taylor's house so that the flimsy shack waved in petulance. The unhappy owner tilted his chair against a wall and braced his feet against the stove.

"Blow, you son of a hurricane," he continued. "Shove, and yank, and jerk, and whipsaw, till the cows come home. You can't put my fur on end. I come from a place where the wind is made and boxed up and sold, and I used to meet you on Lake Street when you was no bigger than a whiff. How'd you leave the folks in Chi, or didn't you leave none? I wish I was back there. I wonder who will win the jackpot in at Rancey's this evenin'? I wonder if any of the boys will ante for me and say, 'Good old Hof Taylor! Too bad the squirrels caught him. Went nutty over the beauties of farmin', he did, and the joys of fresh air, so he did. What do you know 'bout that?' Farmin'! All I've raised to date is biscuits, and they didn't raise far enough to stretch my jaws. Fresh air! I've seen all the fresh air that lives, and I don't care if I never sees more. Black coal smoke is what my system specifies. And my ears hanker for the twilight song of the elevated, and my feet ache for hot, spongy asphalt, and my nose itches for river ozone, and my eyes burn for the glad lights, and my hands smart for the heave of the reins when the team stands on their toes and swells into their collars. And oh, for a tub of suds! Oh, I'd trade my homestead for one Chicago pavin' block and throw in the blue sky. 'Home, Sweet, Home.' That's where this child wants to be. It's a grand song. I'll have a little on my mouth organ."

He drew a harmonica from his vest pocket and pressed it against his lips.

"Play, baby," he admonished. "Play sweet and low for your Uncle Hof. He's terrible lonely and homesick."

The instrument had time to respond merely to the extent of three bars, when a man's figure appeared in the doorway. The musician became aware of the figure by the shadow that filled the one room of his house. He returned the harmonica to his vest pocket and turned his head inquiringly.

"Come in and set down," he invited. "Are you a homesteader, too, poor fellow, or are you human?"

"Who, me? I never heard of homesteaders 'fore now. Come to think it

over, guess I did read 'bout them somewhere, along with pollywogs and beetle bugs in some book dealing with the curiosities of nature. Me? I'm a rancher. That's my ranch, six miles down the coulee. You can see a couple of the buildings, if you step outside."

"I've seen 'em. They're the only things 'cept country to see in any direction whichsoever. I was thinkin' of prancin' down there right soon to investigate what them buildings was and who was in 'em."

"I've saved you the bother. Don't you farm none? That's what I thought homesteaders was for—to stick seeds in the ground and pull weeds."

"Farm? What'd I farm with? A knife and fork? Listen. You can sob on my shoulder. I spent half of my bundle of kale in St. Paul and Minneapolis on my way up here. It ain't fair to have two such big towns so close together, is it, now? And the other half I flipped in gettin' located on this homestead and buildin' this brown stone front and back. Since then, for two weeks, I've been settin' here calculatin' how big a fool I am. My 'rithmetic and all my patience was used up when you come passin' by."

"Where are you from?"

"The southwest corner of Lake Michigan. Get off and turn to the right and ask anybody. Hof Taylor by name; truck driver by inclination and profession. But as soon as harvest comes, I'm goin' thrashin' and make some money to start farmin'. What do you raise—muley cows?"

"Only on holidays. Week days I raise horses."

"Horses!" cried the homesteader. "Now you're beginnin' to take holt. My middle name is horse. I had a team comin' five, three-quarter Percheron, that could snake two ton through any traffic that ever blocked State and Madison at noon on the day before Christmas and never slip a hoof. Five hundred I took for them, and I kissed them good-bye. Soon as I salt down five hundred I'm goin' back, and if the lad I sold 'em to won't exchange 'em for half a thousand flat, I'll bale him in a wad and feed him for hay. And if he has let that team fall on the cobbles and skin their knees, why, I'll chop him up for chicken feed."

"My, how bloodthirsty!" remarked the rancher. "Can you ride?"

"Anything with four legs and a back. I rode over at the stock-yards for a couple of years."

"Ever do any horse stealin'?"

"No, I'm an honest man."

"No? Well, listen to my proposition just the same. My name is Dow Carpenter. You're new in this country and you don't know me. I came up here to your shack this afternoon to chase you out. I didn't wish no homesteaders playin' 'Home, Sweet Home' in my ear. I wants free range for my stock. I'm figurin' on grazin' cattle next year."

"All right. Graze tarantulas and billy goats if you likes. You didn't chase me. What next?"

Carpenter gazed steadily at his host for several seconds, and the homesteader as steadily returned the look. "I wants the land for free grazin'," at length remarked the rancher. There was something approaching persuasion in his voice. "I don't see why homesteaders has to horn in on this rough grazin' land. There's plenty of better farmin' country up north."

"I don't know, either, when it comes to knowin'. I just whirled 'round three times and lit here."

"You're the second one to light. By-and-by they'll be droppin' like ducks, if us ranchers don't do somethin'. Last year some fellow took up a homestead eight miles west of me. He didn't last long."

"What happened to him?" asked Hof Taylor. "Or is it unmentionable?"

"Probably so, to him. First, his barn blowed down; then some shortsighted person mistook his horses for antelope and shot 'em, and then his house burned one day when he was gone to town for grub. He sure had tough luck."

"What became of him? Did somebody with bad hearin' mistake him for a cockroach and poison the poor insect?"

"It would have come to that, but the miserable cricket left afore anybody could squash him; went back to his mamma, I reckon. He was too young, anyway, to run loose. Looked about twenty-one with no wisdom teeth cut."

"What was his name?"

"Harris, or Harrison, or some such like that."

"So you ran him out?"

"I ain't braggin'. I sort of coaxed him out."

"And you come visitin' to-day to sort of coax me out?" asked Hof Taylor.

"I come to size you up."

"How do I size?"

"Too heavy on your feet to run. But I think I can buy you out."

"How come you at that think? I ain't nothin' to sell, 'cept this hen-house we're reposin' in so comfortable. The land ain't mine yet, and won't be for three years. Think again and maybe you'll astonish me."

"You can sell your valuable services," stated the rancher. "If you can rope and bridle five hundred dollars and your fare to the southwest corner of Lake Michigan, you'd be willin' to go, wouldn't you?"

"Go? That ain't no word to use 'round me; I'd fly. Man, I can feel the pin-feathers on my arms already."

"You don't fancy homesteadin'; and I don't fancy homesteaders. If I show you an easy way to earn five hundred and return fare both of us gets what we wants."

"Proceed some more. You talk better'n patent medicine."

"Now, we're smoochin' 'long nice, knee to knee," said Carpenter, settling himself on the doorstep. "Ride easy, and I'll proceed. Listen. There's a bunch of horses down in Montana that I wants to drive up to my ranch. Owin' to circumstances beyond my control, it's necessary to do the drivin' at night and, furthermore, on a night like to-morrow night, when there's no moon. You understand the beauty of my conversation?"

"My brain is slower than molasses in January, but I feel a thaw arrivin'. Proceed some more still."

"It's fifty miles to the Montana line," continued Carpenter. "My ranch foreman and me start this evenin' at dark. The ranch hand I expected to go with us had the poor judgment to let a horse throw him yesterday as far as next week, and now he can't ride a rockin' chair. I need a third man, and I can't spare no more from the place."

"The thaw is sure arrivin' fast."

"We'll come by here leadin' a horse. You climb on top that broncho and travel with us. You're to ask no questions, but do as you're told, and keep a clamp on your jaw. To-morrow we rest, and to-morrow night we herd the bunch north to my place. Two hundred and fifty dollars will be tucked in your garter as soon as the last animal is in my corral. In 'bout a month, there'll be another bunch needin' exercise at night, and another two hundred and fifty in your other garter. In the meantime, betwixt and between, you can ride range for me and earn your car fare. Think it over and let me know inside of ten minutes how you think."

"Ten seconds is nine too many," replied the homesteader. "I only know of one better business and that would be clippin' coupons with a band saw. But why stop at two little travelin' parties? I'm not special busy at this time of year, and garters is cheap, and

anybody who will pay me two dollars and fifty cents per mile for me to ride with them can start for Halifax and I'll enjoy followin' 'long after."

"There'll be only two ridin' parties and no more," replied the rancher. "Ridin' at night arouses curiosity, and I don't like to have myself talked 'bout. My feelin's are sensitive. Besides, I'm goin' into the cattle business this fall with some meat packers, and I won't have time for pleasure trips."

"But how do you know that I won't hurt your feelin's by talkin'?"

"I don't know, but I'm gamblin' you won't. Just like you're gamblin' I won't. If you did talk, after the trip, you would have just as much to talk yourself out of as I would. It works both ways, don't it? As for what I've said so far this afternoon, print it on handbills, if you feel that way, and pass the bills all 'round. It would be your word against mine, and you're a stranger on this shank of the prairie."

"One more question before I clamp my jaw and do as I'm told. Where's your affidavit that you'll pay me the two hundred and fifty simoleons when the last cayuse is in your corral tomorrow night? My garter is stretched all out of shape already. Somehow, my curiosity gets the best of my good manners."

"I'll bring the money with me tonight, and you can put it any place you like 'round this mansion until you get back. Any place, just so you and me knows where it is."

"Real money? No check? Funny how lively my curiosity is this afternoon."

"Real money—bank notes. Which color do you prefer? Your ten minutes is up. Yes or no?"

"I'll try anythin' once."

"All right," answered the rancher, arising from the doorstep and taking up the reins that his saddled horse dragged on the ground as the animal cropped the grass in front of the shack. "Have the dishes washed by eight o'clock to-night. We'll be ridin' by shortly after eight."

"Must you be movin'? Well, so long. Looks like the sun would set in the west this evenin'. Hurry back."

Herb Essley, foreman on the Carpenter ranch, was washing his russet-tanned countenance from a tin wash-pan on the sill of the bunkhouse in preparation for his supper, when the proprietor rode around the corner of the barn and dismounted. Soap suds covered Herb's face and he could not see. He turned his head and reached blindly for the towel.

"Dow?" he inquired.

"No," answered his employer, approaching. "This is Santa Claus."

"I didn't hear no sleigh bells and it's a long time till Christmas." Herb rubbed his visage vigorously, and one eyebrow appeared above the soap line. "Did you run that homesteadin' fellow back where he belongs?"

"Run nothin'," answered Dow Carpenter, testily. "That fellow has locomotor aphasia of the brain and hind legs. He wouldn't run to a fire." The rancher kicked the bunkhouse disgustedly. "He wouldn't run from sizzlin' dynamite."

Herb rubbed again and a second eyebrow appeared. "What you goin' to do 'bout that homesteadin' prairie wolf? Pretend you don't see him when you pass each other on the way out to pick wild flowers of a mornin'?"

"I'm goin' to take him with us tonight."

"What?" cried Herb, opening his wide big eyes and with a howl of pain promptly closing them. "Wait a minute till I can look you over and determine what brand of tanglefoot that homesteader poured you." He rubbed briskly and at length opened his eyes. "You never was much of a snifter, and even now your headlight don't seem

blazin' bright. Where does this idea catch you worst, or can't you say? Tell it to old Doc Essley and he sure will write you a prescription in plain English. Snort out the idea."

"It's this way, Herb," began the rancher. "I'm gettin' cold feet clear up to my knees concernin' this Montana trip."

"We've done the same, identical thing in the past, and the damage was nothin' or less. It's a cheap way of acquirin' horses, and I admires my percentage of the gate receipts; so does the two lads in Montana. What we have done once, I reckon we can do again. Them's my sentiments."

"True enough, we've pulled the trick afore, but every time we makes the play our chances are taller, heavier and wider. This deal is all set and I'll play it out. The two boys across the line has the horses up against the border waitin' for us. We'll start to-night—"

"Good! You're shoutin' now."

"And after to-night, I'm through. It's gettin' too dangerous—harder for our men to land jobs on the big Montana ranches, harder to sell horses. The owners down there are countin' heads more careful and makin' certain every young animal is branded. Also, they're lookin' more critical at brands horses has already. Maybe they don't actually know they've been losin' some of the young horses and maybe they don't know they've been losin' them this direction. Maybe they're just on the verge of beginnin' to wonder. I don't know, but I knows this: after the deal to-night, I goes into the cattle business and I goes straight. Do you travel with me?"

"The straightest way is the shortest way home," mused Herb. "I ain't no home but this. I travels straight if you do. Farewell, big gate receipts."

"Farewell," echoed Dow Carpenter.

"This homesteadin' badger, how does he cut into the pie?" asked the foreman. "I ain't ever asked him to pull up a chair. I ain't even seen him. What's his name, or ain't he named?"

"Hof Taylor, so he said."

"What did you make such a pet of him for? He must have purred and rubbed your shins."

"You remember that young homesteader, Harris or Harrison, or whatever his name was, that we run off last year? You remember he made no holler? He just disappeared. But there was talk up and down the trail to town. It ain't in the nature of things for a man, even a cussed homesteader, to have his barn blowed over, his horses shot dead, and his house burned down, all in six weeks. Some folks sort of looked our way inquirin'-like—"

"Let 'em look. It will do 'em good."

"It didn't do our reputations special good."

"My reputation ain't ailin'. You can't keep folks from thinkin.' That's what they believe brains is for. But they think twice and repeat afore they talk once whenever I knocks on the front door. Concernin' this here homesteadin' caterpillar—did he blight your reputation?"

"No, not as I noticed. I don't intend that he will. He has a snoutful of homesteadin' this very minute. He's blowed his money paid him for a truck team. All he wants now is carfare and five hundred dollars to buy back his team in Chicago and he will hasten to where he belongs."

"If you're startin' a subscription list for homesick homesteaders, pass right on and try the next house. I'm powerful short to-day, and the rent is due, and the children need new shoes, and the missus wants a—"

"I wouldn't subscribe to a new rope to hang him with," asserted Dow Carpenter, "but I'll have him caught ridin' a horse that don't belong to him."

"How so?"

"Leave that to me. And leave to the Montana ranchers the merry little fact that they will make life interestin' then for our homesteadin' friend. And while that is proceedin', you and me will be back here sleepin' quiet and peaceful. He won't never return to bother us."

"How so, once more?"

"I told him I was short a man to make this trip to-night and that I would pay him two hundred and fifty to go with us. Also, that I would pay him the same to make a second trip with us a month later, and that he could chore 'round in the meantime and accumulate his car fare to Chicago. He grabbed like a coyote at a roosting hen. You and me ride by his place to-night, leadin' a third horse for him—Baldy, the sorrel."

"Baldy, the sorrel!" ejaculated Herb Essley. "Why, that mangy runt can't carry a full-grown man to Montana and back. He will go lame afore we are half way to the line."

"I'm countin' on Baldy goin' lame. If he isn't limpin' by the time we hit the border, I'll trade mounts with the homesteader, and make the sorrel lame."

"But I don't see—"

"You ain't paid to see, think, or smell. You're paid to do what I tell you to do."

"Is that so? Do you mind if I sneeze now and then, Mister High Horse?" returned Herb Essley.

Two hours later, the rancher and his foreman rode to the homesteader's shack. Dow Carpenter dismounted, and leaving his companion outside, opened the door without knocking. Hof Taylor, with chair tilted against the wall and feet braced against the stove, was devoting himself to music. His hat was on his head, and his coat was on his back.

The rancher closed the door and remarked, "How high can you count?"

The homesteader finished the chorus of "Home, Sweet Home," and carefully tucked the harmonica into a vest pocket before he replied, "Fingers, or pencil and paper?"

"Suit yourself," answered Dow Carpenter, tossing a package of bank-notes into the other's lap.

"Pretty, pretty," said Hof, smoothing the contents upon one knee. "Now, let's see if you and me speak the same kind of 'rithmetic." He counted the bills slowly. "Grand total, two hundred and fifty dollars, and no cents. Correct. Where shall I hide this legacy?"

"Hide it where you please. Get action; we're due to be movin'."

"How would this suit?" asked the homesteader, stuffing the bank notes into an empty baking-powder can, and raising a short section of board from the floor beneath the stove, he disclosed a hole dug in the ground. "After you left this afternoon I spent one hour of my valuable life preparin' this safety deposit vault."

"Good enough. Slap in the can and cover it with dirt and put back the board."

"There we are," replied Hof Taylor. "And now you and me has a secret between us. Ain't it sweet to have secrets between you and me?"

Three horsemen rode south through the night. One was short and one was tall and one was neither short nor tall. They rode in single file for miles across the open prairie and not one addressed another. At midnight they struck a trail that angled southwest.

"Fair time," said the short man, drawing rein. "We're half-way there. Everybody happy?"

"I ain't," replied the tall man; "neither is my horse. I suspicion that he is thinkin' 'bout goin' lame. He told me three miles back that I was too heavy for him. He didn't have nobody else to talk to and neither did I."

"Don't you believe anythin' that broncho tells you," advised the man who was neither short nor tall. "I've rode him a hundred miles between sunup and sundown."

"You mean it seemed like a hundred miles to you. This cayuse wouldn't go a hundred miles for a carload of oats. He told me so two miles back. I didn't ask him; he just up and told me."

"Tell him to keep travelin'," said the short man. "We can't have no lame brutes in this outfit. Come on."

"Hear that, little horse? Be reasonable and mind your boss."

One hour later, the tall man remarked, "This horse ain't the least bit reasonable; he's done gone lame."

"Bad?" asked the short man.

"Tolerable, I should say. He told me just now he was good for somethin' like ten miles if necessary."

"It's necessary, and no mistake. Ten miles more will put us close to the border. You can walk the rest of the way."

"I don't like to walk," wailed the tall man. "Be good, little horse, be good to your Uncle Hof."

The little sorrel did his best, but Hof Taylor dismounted within half an hour.

"As I said, I don't like to walk, but I'd rather walk than ride this cripple," he stated.

"I don't believe you know how to ride," stormed the short man. "What'd you let the sorrel go lame on you for? You told me you could ride anything with four legs."

"So I can, Boss Carpenter, but this here animal only has three legs and a half. Get me a four-legged critter and I'll show you."

"I will as soon as we meet the other boys. You'll have to walk there. Come along this trail as fast as you can. It will be daylight inside of three hours and by that time we all want to be under cover. Listen to me, now, and get this straight, my homesteadin' friend."

"I'm listenin' with both ears."

"Follow this trail and within two hours you will cross a stream. You are over the border then. Soon you'll come to a fork in the trail. There's a scrub willow in the fork. Take the right-hand trail and keep travelin' till you start down into a coulee. That'll be 'bout three miles further on. Watch for us in the coulee. You understand?"

"Plain as plain."

The rancher and the foreman cantered on through the darkness; the homesteader, afoot, and leading the limping sorrel, proceeded to follow.

"Little horse," mused Hof Taylor, "I smell a mice. But whether it's a field mice, house mice, white mice, gray mice, or bob-tailed mice, I can't tell to you, and I can't tell to myself, either. For why did they give me you to ride? Not that I has anythin' personal against you; not that, at all. You're a nice, sober little cuss so far as you go, but you don't go fifty miles to Montana with your Uncle Hof straddlin' your back. I knew your shoulder was off the minute I set in the saddle, and I knew you was goin' lame this side the border. I wonder if my friends down the trail knew as much as that? They looks like smart men. For why did they make you and me acquainted? Howsomever that may be, I don't regret that they did, for I'm interested in willow trees and I hates to admire them with a crowd of two or more hangin' 'round. I don't mind your bein' present; I don't mind you in the least; you and me is comrades in misery. It's my unsolicited opinion that walking through this cave of a night is a gritty way of earnin' two hundred and fifty. Speak up, Baldy, and tell us what you think 'bout all this."

The sorrel did not answer, but continued to limp philosophically along

behind the tall man. In time they came to a stream.

"I hates to ride you across," remarked the homesteader, "but I hates worse to have my feet wet. I may be compelled to do some sprintin' within the next twenty-four hours, and I sprint best in dry socks." He mounted the sorrel and rode through the water, dismounting when the opposite bank was reached. "Here we are, on the trail again, and no damage done your shoulder, I trusts. That willow tree in the fork ought to be showin' soon."

The tall man found the tree a quarter of a mile down the trail.

"Somethin' tells me," he ruminated, "that there's a hole in the right side of the trunk of this tree, 'bout six feet from the ground where a limb has broke off. Sure as you live, Baldy, here's the hole. It would make a ripsnortin' place to hide a little note in. And here's a little note all writ and in my vest pocket where I keeps my harmonica. That's coincidence. Always make the best of coincidence, Baldy; don't you forget that. Supposin' I just shove this little note in this here little hole and we goes on our way rejoicin' and sees what happens? You wouldn't tell nobody, would you? And you haven't objections, have you? The ayes win. In goes the note. Come on now, Baldy; we mustn't be late arrivin' at the coulee. Your boss was snappish the last we saw of him, and I don't propose to let his disposition curdle and me be to blame. Him and I has a secret, and you and I has a secret. I'd rather have a secret with you Baldy, than I would with him."

The first silver of daylight was streaking the eastern sky when the tall man and the sorrel horse descended the bank of the coulee. Half way across the flat bottom a whistle smote the pedestrian's ear from the left of the trail. He trilled a bar of "Home, Sweet Home," and turned to the left.

Herb Essley arose from the ground to greet him with, "You're a long time comin'."

"I don't wear spring-heels and one of my corns is hurtin' me powerful. What's the menu now?"

"Follow me."

"More walkin'? My contract didn't mention walkin'; it said I was to ride. Pretty soon I'll be lamer than this little horse and then I'm liable to set down on you and cry. Where's that new horse the boss promised me?"

"Over here in a clump of willows. Make your feet twinkle, corns or bunions. We've got to drive that herd farther off from the trail before daylight comes, and it's comin' fast now."

As they approached the willows, Dow Carpenter rode forth, leading a horse by a rope.

"Here's your new broncho," he informed the homesteader. "Throw your saddle and bridle on him quick. We're goin' to take the herd a ways down the coulee. You follow along behind and don't let any stragglers past you."

"How many are we?"

"Two lads who brought up this herd, and us three who rode here to-night."

"I walked part way. Don't count me a whole one."

"I'm worried 'bout the other two boys and the second bunch of horses," continued the rancher. "We ain't seen a sign of them yet, and they ought to have been here long ago."

"Maybe all their critters went lame," suggested Hof Taylor.

"They must have been late startin'. We can't wait here any longer. Are you ready?"

"What'll I do with Baldy?"

"Turn him loose. He will edge in with the others."

"Good-by, Baldy. Whoa, there, you great, big stepladder! Let your Uncle Hof climb aboard. He's kind to dumb animals, but he don't like 'em too dumb."

In the light of dawn the five men drove the herd of young horses east along the coulee bottom. Herb Essley rode beside his employer.

"The lad tells me," he vouchsafed, "that the ranchers down here has a reward posted of five hundred dollars for information leadin' to the apprehension of certain unknown parties—or some such words. How would it be for you and me to tell on each other and split the reward?"

"Most pleasin'. Try it and see."

"I can see it without tryin'," said Herb Essley. "The two lads also tells me that the ranchers of this section are ridin' range freely, on the lookout for them unknown parties; with blood in their eyes."

"That so?" All the better. This here homesteader, whose corns hurts him, thinks there's two more men to join us with another bunch of horses. I led him on to think so. 'Bout five o'clock this afternoon I'll send him out to hunt the other men and find what the trouble is. He won't find the men, but I'm expectin' he will find the trouble. I'll give him orders to ride south fifteen miles and look 'round. That will put him onto the Lazy Y ranch. Probably he will stop afore he gets that far—stop by request of some of the Lazy Y men. And he will be ridin' a Lazy Y horse, which fact will be interestin' for him to explain."

"His explanations may interest us."

"How so? By dark we'll start north with our herd. Not a branded animal, except what we rode down, goes back with us. I warned the boys that last time that I wanted no more branded horses included. I suppose they slipped some in, havin' the same thirst for gate receipts as you has. If they did, every brand comes out, and the two boys who brought them up here can start them south this evenin'. By the time this homesteader can bring our name into his conversation with the Lazy Y men, we will be across the line. By this time to-morrow, we will be back on the ranch and there won't be a brand there that don't belong there."

Several miles farther on they came to an opening in the north coulee bank.

"Drive 'em in," called Dow Carpenter, and the forward riders turned the straggling herd toward the opening.

Hof Taylor, bringing up the rear, was the last to enter. He found a corral designed by nature. "Some barnyard," he muttered to himself, watching the horses scatter over the half section of land in the blind coulee and begin eager grazing. "Some barnyard; only the gap has to be watched."

Herb Essley was busy with willow branches and matches. "Green wood and hard to start goin'," he said. "Coffee and bacon for breakfast. Can you drink your coffee black?"

"The blacker, the stronger," replied the homesteader. "And I certainly need strength. My corns are worse than the evil of temptation. After breakfast I'll have a sleep, if there's nothin' better to do."

"You'll have your turn guardin' the gap," said Dow Carpenter. "After that you can drop dead if you want to."

"If you give me the first watch, I'll try to oblige."

"It's three-thirty now. I'll take the first trick from four to six, 'cause I hates to miss my rest. Herb can have from six to eight for the same reason, only more so. You can have from eight to ten."

"Then at ten o'clock," replied Hof Taylor, "all I'll suffer just to disoblige you, will be a stroke of paralysis."

At ten, however, he lay down and promptly went to sleep. At four o'clock he was awakened by the rancher's hand upon his shoulder.

"Get up. We need you."

"I knew you would," answered Hof.

"The other herd hasn't come in," continued the rancher. "Somethin' has

delayed the boys. We have to start north at dark. I want you to ride south fifteen miles or so and look 'round. If you run across the boys, tell 'em we're here waitin', and if they can reach here by dark to keep comin', but if they can't make it, tell 'em to turn their horses loose and go back. Whether you find the boys or not, return here by dark."

"That's some ride, with fifty miles ahead of me to-night."

"You said you could ride; I never said you could. There'll be a fresh horse for you to-night."

"I'll do it to oblige you," replied Hof Taylor. "Any grub handy?"

"Cold bacon and hot coffee. Help yourself."

A few minutes later, Hof Taylor rode out of the natural corral into the coulee. He crossed the bottom and climbed the opposite bank, and continued south. For half an hour he rode, then halted and looked at his watch. "Five o'clock," he said. "I'll loaf a while, and then by the time I gets back there, things ought to be just 'bout beginnin' to happen." He drew the harmonica from his vest pocket and devoted himself to "Home, Sweet Home." It was his intention to play for fifteen minutes, but he found the charms of the melody so compelling that the half of an hour went by before he sighed and glanced at his watch. "Sufferin' smokestacks!" he exclaimed, and hastily galloped in the direction from which he had come. As he approached the coulee, he slowed his mount to a walk, cautiously drew near the bank and peered over. Below, he saw something that caused him to ejaculate, "Things has happened!" and to ride quickly down the slope.

The herd of horses was being driven west along the bottom. Four men, whom Hof recognized as his former companions, followed in single file. Their arms appeared to be bound tightly to their sides. Behind the four came six strangers.

"Your name?" asked the leader, as the homesteader drew rein alongside.

"Hof Taylor."

"You look the description. Prove it."

With a smile, the homesteader drew the harmonica from his vest pocket and played "Home, Sweet Home."

"Here's a check for five hundred," said the leader. "It's made out to you. Are you ridin' our way?"

"Thanks, no. I've a rendezvous at a scrub willow in the fork of a trail—a rendezvous with a fellow named Harrison and a bakin' powder can that comes out of a hole under a loose board; eh, Carpenter?" The homesteader winked, but the rancher did not return the salute. "I guess I'll have to change horses for that sorrel over there that's limpin'. This critter isn't mine."

"Don't bother," said the leader. "Keep the horse you're on. He's mine, and I gives him to you."

"Thanks, once more. Any word for Harrison?"

"Say good-by for us again. He was a good ranch hand. I hates to lose him. I reckon he's headin' east as soon as he meets you."

"East is the word for him and me, too," replied Hof Taylor, gathering up his reins. "Well, so long. Oh, yes! I most forgot somethin' I wants to tell my boss. You may be glad to know, Carpenter, that Harrison is a friend of mine. Fact is, he's a relative of mine. Wanted excitement and run away from home—changed his name. I'm glad he did, if he had to be tripped up by a tumbleweed like you. And now I meets him and the aforesaid bakin' powder can at a scrub willow in the fork of a trail not so many miles away. Yes, it was all arranged by a little note. You see, I'm his big brother. Ask Baldy, the little sorrel horse, I told Baldy all 'bout it."

# AT SIX BELLS, SATURDAY

*By HERMAN HOWARD MATTESON*

NO one knew his name, and year after year, for sufficient reason, he forbore to enlighten the curious. Latterly, however, he had been called "Denim," or "Old Den," a sobriquet acquired when, surprised at night on board his yawl by the "gold-braiders," he had gone over the side in a state of nakedness, if not of innocence, had swum ashore, broken into a summer cottage, fashioned himself a pair of trousers from a window hanging, with a potato knife, overcasting the seams with wrapping twine, and, in this garment nattily arrayed, had contrived finally to reach his little cabin secreted upon the side of Doe Bay Mountain, Orcas Island, of the San Juans of Puget Sound.

At this time, deciding that it might prove strategic to shift his base, Den repaired to Blakeley Island, some three miles distant, built him a driftwood cabin near the beach in a spot admirably sheltered by a thicket of scrubby fir and alder.

This move, Den always accounted the most fortunate in the entire log of his life's tempestuous voyage. An eighth of a mile distant from the new shack, lived Toketie and her brother Dave. Dave was a furtive, undecided sort of youth, about twenty years of age. Toketie, a couple of years older, while her sympathies were broad as the bay before her shack, was quite as resistless, when her affections or dislikes were engaged, as its surging tides.

Yes, decidedly epochal in the unrighteous career of the smuggler, was the meeting with Toketie. Toketie knew Den was a smuggler, yet in her Old Den met, for the first time in twenty wicked years, some one who took him on faith, asked no questions, propounded neither advice nor rules of conduct.

Old Den had a way of never going exactly where he appeared to be going, a habit which had conduced not a little to his continued untrammeled enjoyment of the open air and scenery of the islands. At the moment, for example, his speed boat, the acquisition of which had marked a distinct industrial advance over the limitations of the heavy yawl of former days, came tearing through Obstruction Pass, headed apparently for East Sound. Off the point of Blakeley Island, where the rugged cliffs with their softening fringe of fir cast lengthening shadows across the bay, Den put the wheel hard down, cut in the muffler, slid along in the syrupy smoothness of the dark, in-shore waters, came to anchor, landed in the dingy which he had had in tow and drew it from sight into a willow thicket.

Looking to right and left, Den cautiously made his way to his cabin clearing. He did not enter at once. Instead, with a blunt hand, and a wrist as thick and knotted as a towing hawser, he parted the brush and peered about sharply. Between his gray-green eyes showed two deep, ugly wrinkles. A perpetual mood of apprehension, dignified, ennobled by a desperate defiance and a courage unquestioned, had limned his leathern face with lines that, while sinister and forbidding, yet lent to his countenance a cast that was both ominous and heroic. Den's scowl, like the rattle of the honest diamond-back, meant business always.

As he neared the cabin door, he came

to a sudden stop, then advanced slowly. A note had been pinned to the panel. Gingerly, Den took down the missive, spread it upon his palm, began to read. As he read, the bushy eyebrows began to lift, smoothing away the scowling wrinkles. The corners of his mouth drew up. Denim chuckled.

"Dear Old Den:—Don't forget to enter in your reckonin' that you're to warp in Saturday afternoon at six bells, come alongside, and h'ist a cargo of chuck. There'll be buckets of your favorite black tea, and a hull scow load of them currant buns of whom you are so fond. Yours with *hiyu tikegh,* Toketie."

"'Yours with *hiyu tikegh,*' much love. 'Toketie,' I swear!"

Grinning still, Den unlocked the door, entered the cabin, re-read the note, laid it upon the table. He glanced up at the small ship's clock ticking upon the wall. Even as he looked, the clock struck five bells, half past two. In half an hour it would be six bells, the hour of Toketie's party. This was Saturday. He had half an hour.

Running an experimental palm over his face, Den slopped some cold water into his shaving mug, and began to puddle it about with a stubby, worn brush.

One side of his face lathered, Den suddenly dropped the brush back in the mug, stepped into his tiny lean-to' sleeping room, and began pawing about in a battered, leather trunk. Presently he fetched forth a tintype, corners bent, and with the lacquer finish here and there peeled from the metal. This was a typical tintype portrait of a little girl about three years of age, sitting in an awkward, cross-legged posture upon one of those monstrous, upholstered stools never found, fortunately, outside the domain of the itinerant photographer.

A moment Den surveyed the tintype fondly, then returned it to the trunk. It was his little girl, whom he hadn't seen for twenty years. If alive, she'd be Toketie's age.

"Why," communed Den as he completed the operation of lathering, "her and Toketie look as much alike as two Dolly Varden trout. They do; I swear they do."

He wagged his head to the slap of the razor as he whacked it back and forth upon a bit of trunk strap. "They do look alike," he repeated, betraying an obsession to which he had clung with fanatical persistence in the face of the fact that his little girl had had blue eyes, while Toketie's eyes were brown.

A rasping scrape or two, a glance at the ship's clock, and again Den approached the table to re-read the invitation. "My favorite currant buns! I swear!"

Then continued the rasp of the blade as he talked to himself out of the twisted corner of his mouth. "O' course Dave'll be there—and Rolly. Sure, this Rolly party'll be there. And I'm glad of it, yes, I am. I do just hope nothin' brings I and Rolly to a bight before the articles is signed, the weddin's said. Wouldn't it be turrible if I and Rolly collided head on before him and Toketie's married, and I just had to kill him, just had to? I swear I hope not."

The spume upon the unshaven portion of his face began to billow and heave as this thought, like a troublous wind, blew upon his soul.

"I gotta be careful," he admonished himself, "yeah, 'cause him and Toketie's dead in love. I seen that right away. And that's good. I wants her married, settled down, and not gallivantin' around to them cannery dances, yawin' around the floor, rove about by the arms of fish-pirates, beachcombers, smug—"

Old Den caught himself suddenly, but went on stubbornly. "I mean it, smugglers. If I don't know the likes of them hain't for her, who does? Who does, I say? I don't want Toketie to them dances. I wants her married to a good man, and decent. That, this Rolly party is. Yes he is, even if he was sent here

to ketch I and Dave. What's that got to do with it, when it comes to sizin' up whether he's fitten for Toketie? Nothin', I say, nothin'."

Smirking with satisfaction into the mirror, he went on: "This Rolly party fooled Toketie and he fooled Dave, but he never fooled me, not for the while of a piston stroke. No. Them soft hands, wearin' a necktie with a flannel shirt, a regular watch chain—fishermen wears leather lanyards—fool me? What does get me though is why he hain't performed long ago. He's had chances. Why, he had Dave dead to rights; Mudhead Dave warpin' in with cargo, never givin' a look to port or sta'board, and there this Rolly quilled up in the jungles. Why, he could a-took Dave, Rolly could, like a mink takin' a sick water rat. I swear I don't *cumtux* that at all. It can't be Rolly hain't got the sand. No. If this Rolly party hain't got sand, I'm a tusker walrus, and I gen'ally always read a man's chart right; I've had to."

Denim doused his face in the basin, scrubbed it vigorously with a rough towel. A thought had struck him suddenly, and he came to a pause, the towel lacking a few inches of the desired nail. "That might be—Rolly crazy over Toketie—he hain't had the heart, Dave bein' her brother. I swear!"

He glanced at the ship's clock. He'd have to hurry, or he would be late.

Unbuckling his belt, he slid into a clean, flannel shirt, the operation requiring the placing aside for the moment of the heavy, old styled, six-shooter. As he hauled in on the belt he gazed down at the gun. Here was a fine point in etiquette.

"Should I ought to pack you along, or shouldn't I? I wouldn't bust Toketie's party, or her weddin'—still—"

He picked up the heavy gun, thrust it into his belt, then donned his tarpaulin coat, draping the skirts of the latter discretely over the weapon. Locking the door, he hurried up the trail.

As Den walked in at the kitchen door unannounced, Toketie, her face flushed from close communion with various pots and kettles bubbling on the kitchen stove, looked up and gave him a hearty Siwash welcome, *"Klahowa, tillicum."*

Den grinned at the girl fondly, walked across the floor to the door opening into the combination dining and living room, through which, also Indian fashion, he first thrust his head, then followed it with his body. No one was there but Dave, who gave the old man a cunning leer, jerked his head suggestively in the direction of the dense wood back of the house.

Toketie bustled in with some dishes, and a hand full of knives and forks. "We're all here now, and ready to cut our hawse, exceptin' Rolly. He'll be here; I seen him pass up the back trail half an hour ago."

Again Den and Dave exchanged glances, the look of the latter carrying a decided degree of discomfort and apprehension.

"There's another party, too, hain't here," added Den. "Where 'bouts is Jerry at?"

"Drat Jerry," answered Toketie impatiently. "He stole my thimble this morning, and I've hunted high and I've hunted low. Drat that bird, Den. When you wished that robber off onto me you done me low."

Den chuckled. Jerry was a tame crow that Den had captured when in the pin feather stage, and presented to Toketie. Jerry, while acknowledging the domicile of Toketie as his home, had never forgotten Old Den, and Old Den had never forgotten Jerry. Jerry would follow the old man all over the island, or fly sometimes a mile into the offing to alight upon the prow of the home-coming boat. Between Jerry and Old Den there was honor, and understanding.

"He'd steal the hair offen your head, that Jerry bird would," averred Toketie. "They hain't a thing safe in the house.

Lay down a spoon—gone. Even postage stamps I gotta pack into the Bible and lay a stone on the cover. Here yesterday he makes off with a hull new paper of pins—gone."

"Hain't he a smart bird!" exclaimed Old Den admiringly.

"Smart! He's just plain *hiyu kapsula,* which is low down thief. I guess I'll live through the shock if he don't never come home."

Officiously Den followed Toketie back into the kitchen and removed the tarpaulin coat with a flourish. He was going to help. "He'll be here, this Rolly will," said Den comfortably.

Toketie blushed. Then catching sight of the huge six-shooter protruding from Den's belt, she pointed.

"Where's your red flag, Den? Don't you know a craft dassent warp into a friendly port loaded with bum-bum 'less it flies the red square? It hain't perlite to pack a fizgig to a party. No."

With one deft move, Toketie achieved a feat unique in the annals o' Puget Sound smugglers — she separated Old Den from his gun.

Stepping into the dining room, she laid the weapon upon a shelf and returned to the kitchen. Rolly's halloo, sounding from the trail, announced his coming, and Toketie and Den gathered up the multiplicity of dishes containing the feast and placed them upon the table.

Then in came the belated Rolly. Something of sadness mingled with undisguised affection was in the look which he directed at Toketie. For an instant his keen gray eyes rested upon Den, then shifted to Dave, who squirmed uneasily in his chair, arose for no especial reason and seated himself again.

The party was on. Beside the "buckets of black tea and the scow load of currant buns," there was meat, and potatoes, and gravy, and pie, a bill of fare possibly not in vogue at afternoon tea affairs on the mainland, but absolutely the proper thing for a San Juan Island blow-out.

Famously the function progressed. Den cargoed up with tea, and more tea, and more buns until it seemed likely, as he declared, that he would start a seam.

The feast had progressed well toward its close, when with a discordant "awk," the marauding Jerry alighted upon the sill of the open window, hopped to the edge of the table, and laid down a torn strip of thin, gaudy paper bearing a number of Chinese characters.

Dave's eyes started as he caught sight of Jerry's plunder; his jaw jarred open, remained pendulous; his face turned a sickly, fish-belly white and he guiltily shifted his eyes from before Rolly's stern scrutiny. The countenance of Old Den was as rugged and impassive as that of a stone gargoyle. Toketie gave a quick gasp as she read culpability in the weak face of her miserable brother. The bit of paper was a strip torn from the label of a five tael tin of Pen-Yen smoking opium.

Jerry fetching in the tell-tale label, the hang-dog looks of the craven Dave—a discourse from the house top could not have told her more.

Now Toketie understood Dave's sudden access of zeal, the truth about his lying tales of fishing the fruitful night tides, from whence had come the money that chinked unfamiliarly in his pockets. Den, she knew Den was a smuggler, or had been. But Dave—

Her lover's stern face was staring down at the betraying opium label. "I've followed Jerry for days," he said slowly, "all over this island. But the rascal knows his business. I know there's a cache of hop somewhere. Jerry knows—there's the evidence—but he won't tell me." Rolly laughed dryly, picked up the label, folded it absently in his fingers.

Her eyes staring wildly at his speech, Toketie leaned across the table, thrust her face fairly into that of Rolly.

"You're not a fisherman—you're a revenuer, a gold-braider. You've followed Jerry! Not a fisherman! A gold-braider!

A lyin' sneak, that worms its way into our confidence—takes us off guard—coaxes us and tricks us into trustin'—then—"

"I'm sorry, Toketie," said Rolly gently, shoving back his chair. "I had rather, much rather this had not happened now. I had intended to tell you—after your party. It's too bad. We'll have it over and done. Den, you and Dave take a walk with me, show me where this label came from. You might as well."

As Rolly arose, Old Den, with an animal-like cry, clapped his hand to his empty belt. At the move, Rolly thrust his hand toward his shoulder holster, but Toketie was quicker than he. In a flash she had Den's great six-shooter from the shelf above her head, had the muzzle pressed against the revenuer's breast.

"No you don't," she shrilled, "no you don't. *Klatawa,* Den and Dave! Hurry! I'll stick him up till you're safe. Hurry! If he makes a move— Hurry! Don't let no sand run your glass!"

With a whimpering cry, Dave burst through the door and went plunging down the trail toward Den's cabin. Den, walking slowly toward the kitchen, turned and regarded the tableau. Rolly's face was pale as his eyes remained fixed upon the black gun barrel. The free hand of Toketie was quaking like a birch leaf in a gale, but her gun hand was as steady as the rock cliff beside the cabin.

Upon the old smuggler's face was a look of agony, of thwarted hopes and dreams. "Careful, Toketie," he warned, "Don't jump at no hasty conclusions. Careful like now, Toketie."

"Hurry, Den," repeated Toketie nervously. "Belay on that *wawa*—hurry!"

Den turned, disappeared down the trail.

"A revenuer—gold-braider," half whispered Toketie, her gaze fastened upon her prisoner. "With lies he comes, that's how cunnin' he works—warms up the good, the love that's in a body, then—that's a gold-braider."

Not a word answered Rolly, but looked into the eyes that glared into his with a hatred, an implacable fury appalling. Thus they stood, the big gun pressed against his breast while the clock ticked on its tardy seconds. A minute passed, two, three, ten. Then, as the rattling exhaust of the speed boat echoed along the hillside, Toketie dropped the weapon to the floor, flung herself into a chair, her body a quivering heap upon the table.

"Take me! Take me, gold-braider! I'm about your size of game! But you'll never get them. They're a mile to the line by now."

The revenuer leaned forward and placed his hand upon the girl's shoulder. Angrily she shook it away.

"Toketie," he said softly, "listen. Will you listen?"

"Don't talk to me! Don't!" she cried.

Without a further word, he stood by, watched the paroxysm of sobs that shook her slender body.

As Den walked rather slowly down the hill, he came presently in sight of Dave who was running back and forth insanely waving to the old man to come on.

"They hain't no sweat," said Den as he walked into the cabin clearing.

"Oh, come on, Den," moaned Dave. "He'll get us—sure. A year, I'd die, in the pen. Please come on, Den."

Old Den laid a heavy hand upon the boy's shoulder. "This here is lucky for Toketie, after all. You hain't no good, Dave, never was, never will be. You was laid on a rotten keel, and timbered scant. Maybe you can't help it. But I'm doin' some thinkin' about Toketie. This Rolly is a square rig, staunch, true, if he is a revenuer. In time, follerin' course, but for this squall, him and Toketie'd married. They hain't a doubt. Jerry fetchin' loose that hop label has give the matrimonial ship a sheer onto the rocks. She's got to be straightened out, that weddin' ship has. She's gotta."

The thieving Jerry, almost as badly

terrified as Dave, came circling above them and alighted at the old man's feet. "Dum cuss you, Jerry!" exclaimed the smuggler, "I got a notion to strip your fur and fry you at a slow fire."

Again Dave made a frantic appeal. "Hold on," said Den angrily. "I'm thinkin'. If they was a way for Toketie and him to make up, still he's got to make good; he's just got to ketch some one."

Still clutching the youth's arm, Old Den bent his head in deep perplexity.

"Come on, you Dave, and you, you dum cussed jay-bird, both of you."

The old man led Dave into the cabin, whither Jerry followed. Closing the window, lest Jerry take a sudden panic, Den searched forth a bit of paper and a stub of a pencil. Laboriously he wrote.

"Now this here," he explained to Dave, pointing to his effort, "is supposed to be a note that I've wrote when I find out you've grabbed my boat and beat off leavin' me in the lurch like you'd done, if you'd packed the sand. Toketie knows the holler tree where I and you leave word for each other, about fetchin' mail, supplies and so on. Toketie'll think Jerry stole this here note out of the post office tree. This here dockyment puts you in bad, Dave, where you belong. But that don't matter. You'll never come back. You read this note so you'll know I hain't lyin', then you take the speeder, and *klatawa* for all she'll turn up."

Dave read, started to remonstrate, rushed to the door, a narrow margin ahead of a hearty kick, tore down the beach to the motor boat and was away.

Admiring his literary effort for an instant, Den folded it once across, placed it upon the table and opened the window. Then, as if engrossed in some weighty household task, he began moving about the room. Jerry, giving his discoverer and trainer a covert look from one bead of an eye, seized the note and flew through the window. Den thrust his head without and followed the direction of Jerry's flight.

"It worked, dum cussed if it didn't work," he said.

Then Old Den seated himself, shaved a take of nigger-heel from a plug, filled his pipe and waited.

STILL Rolly stood looking down at Toketie when Jerry landed in the window with an announcing "awk." The revenuer took the note from the creature's bill, opened it, read it.

"Toketie," said Rolly beseechingly, 'look what Jerry brought. Read it. It's a note from Den to your brother. You don't want to read it? Listen; I'm going to read it to you:

" 'Dave, you got a nerve to take my speed boat, beat out, and leave me holdin' the sack. You always was no good. I suggest if you ever do sneak back here, to sneak out again quick. Your sister is one reason; I'm the other. You'd 'a' got grabbed long ago but for this Rolly party lovin' your sister, and him lovin' her like he done he didn't pack the sand to grab you account of her. But now it's all off between him and her. She can't pertect you no more. Me, when I cross up with you, you wharf rat, take a man's boat and leave him marooned on a little island with a gold-braider, why when you cross up with me, look out. I aim to just naturally strip all the rags offen your sticks and cave you in amidships, too. Bewair from yours truly, Den."

Toketie lifted her head, took the note from Rolly's hand, read it through. Then she fell to gazing through the window, gently putting away with one hand the strutting Jerry who sidled up as if requesting her to observe what he had done.

"Is that—in the note—Rolly—was that the reason?"

The revenuer nodded. He was very close to her now. One hand was on the back of her chair.

"I," stammered Toketie, "I—" Her eyes fell upon the remains of the forsaken feast. "Gosh, Rolly, we'd better finish our pie."

# SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

*By ELIZABETH ANDERSON*

R. DUFFY struggled with a recalcitrant collar button and cursed the vagaries of a stiff collar. Monkey McGann was an unsympathetic observer; he sat with his chair tilted back against the wall, and manipulated a toothpick with a nice attention to detail.

Duffy settled the collar to his satisfaction and resumed the conversation while he tied his necktie.

"No use being a watchful waiter when you are in need of a job," he said. "You have to hustle yourself and hunt one up. Why don't you?"

"Waste of time," grunted McGann.

"What do you mean—waste of time?" frowned Duffy.

"There ain't no use in my spending a week of my perfectly good time looking for a job that I'll lose in a day," explained McGann with resignation.

"Well, then, don't come grumbling around me," said Duffy, and slipped into his coat.

"I ain't grumbling," answered McGann. "I just said I wisht it was *me* takin' the widow to a show to-night instead of *you*. I was also sayin', though, that when I does a thing, I does it right, and I asks you why you ain't takin' the lady to dinner first?"

"I tell you I haven't the cash!"

"Well, then, between you and me, Mr. E. P. Duffy, if it comes to choosing between havin' a job and no cash, and *not* havin' a job and no cash, me for the 'I won't works!' Why, I could take the widow to a *cheap* show, myself, but I wouldn't risk it. No, sir! I know these dames; they'd rather stay home than sit in a dollar seat on an empty stomach."

If McGann's wisdom caused Mr. Duffy to doubt the ultimate success of his evening, he concealed his uneasiness. He perfumed his handkerchief with a goodly supply of violet water and felt his pocket to be sure the tickets were safe.

"So long," he said. "You and my old dog can keep each other company as usual. Stay as long as you like, Monk, and to-morrow you take my advice and go hunt a job."

At the sound of the closing door, Mr. Duffy's bulldog emerged from under the bed and cocked an inquiring ear at McGann. The Irishman winked at him solemnly and pocketed his toothpick.

"Hullo," he said and obligingly extended his foot to scratch his old crony's back. The dog's lips drew apart in an ecstatic grin and one hind leg beat an enthusiastic *bravo* on the floor. "What are we goin' to do to-night?" asked McGann. "Here, you, quit that! I ain't no massage artist. Come on, let's go out and hunt cats-s-s!"

The dog accepted the invitation with alacrity and bounded down the stairs, barking hysterically. McGann followed lackadaisically; he was thinking. Of late he had been basking in the sun of the widow's approval, and now Mr. Duffy threatened to eclipse that sun. McGann was not depressed by the situation, for he had supreme confidence in himself; he was simply wondering how he could outplay Mr. Duffy as he left the house with his rival's dog at his heels.

It was a hot night and the stoops were crowded. McGann declined several invitations to "Come sit down." He took

the kidding of the loungers with easy good-nature; the fact that he was not unpopular with the fair sex was demonstrated by many a nudge and giggle as he passed. Soon, however, the greetings and giggles grew less frequent, and finally "the neighborhood" was left behind and he walked unnoticed and unknown.

It was thirsty weather, McGann decided, and before long he turned in at a swinging door. Here he cooled his throat with a glass of beer and drew the barkeeper into conversation. It was always easy for McGann to make friends; his red hair; snub nose, and frank manner, seemed to inspire confidence. The barkeeper, who admitted the name of Sikes, was soon persuaded to give his opinion upon the weather, and then the talk drifted to more personal matters.

"Some dog," remarked the dispenser of liquid refreshment as he peered over the counter at McGann's companion.

The dog sat with his tongue lolling from his mouth and with reproachful eyes fixed on the Irishman. He had seen no cats.

"Want to sell him?" asked Mr. Sikes casually.

McGann's eyes narrowed; such words were music to his ears.

"What'll you gimme for him?"

The barkeeper temporized. "Oh, I was on'y talkin'—what's his name?"

"'Bluff,'" said McGann, and as he spoke the word, his inspiration came. "I'll tell you how it is," he said. "He belongs to a friend of mine—a sick friend. 'Monk,' says my friend to me, 'I need money awful bad. Everything has gone except the old dog. Do you think you could sell him for me?' I said I'd try, but I ain't met up with anybody yet who'll give me more than ten dollars for him, and Bluff he ain't no ten-dollar dog. No, sir! Now, I'm wonderin' if I couldn't raffle him off; I ought to be able to sell a lot of chances at a dollar. What d'you say?"

"Sounds good to me," agreed Mr. Sikes. "I wouldn't mind taking a chance myself, and there's some fellows back there playing pool that might like to have a look-in, too."

"Now, see here, you don't know me," said McGann, with an engaging show of candor. "I tell you how we can fix it. I'll go back, and each fellow that wants to can take a number, and I'll put his name down. Then I'll go out and see how many other chaps I can find, and I'll tell 'em all to meet me here at, say—ten-thirty. Nobody need pay me a cent till then, so you can be sure I'm on the square. See?"

"First-rate scheme," approved Mr. Sikes. "I guess the boss'll O. K. the idea, too; the fellows that lose will all want a drink to cheer them up, and the fellow that wins 'll sure want to celebrate. Put me down for two numbers, I'd like to win that dog."

McGann disposed of ten chances in the pool-room and then asked Sikes to direct him to places in the vicinity where he would be likely to get a favorable hearing. With every repetition the Irishman's story gained in pathos. Not only was Bluff's imaginary owner very sick, but his wife was an invalid, the rent was due, and there were five children. Bluff, it seemed, had a wonderfully extensive pedigree. No one, argued McGann, could afford to let this golden opportunity pass; the opportunity of contributing a dollar to a worthy cause and at the same time becoming the owner of such a dog.

In his campaign, McGann was careful to keep well outside the boundaries of "the neighborhood;" for there both Duffy and his dog were known. Once, indeed, disaster threatened, when a prospective owner of Bluff examined him closely. "Well," said this individual, "if he ain't the spittin' image of E. P. Duffy's dog!"

"Say, I like you!" exclaimed McGann heartily. "You know a good dog when you see him. This is a brother of Mr.

Duffy's pup. I know the fellow that raised 'em and he says this is the better of the two. You know what E. P. thinks of his!"

McGann sold thirty-two chances in all. It was a good-natured crowd that gathered in Mr. Sikes's pool-room to wait for the drawing of the lucky number. McGann stood at the door and collected the dollars as the men entered; the pile of coin and bills grew quite imposing. Sikes produced a small colored boy to draw the number, and there was a moment of tense excitement when the little black hand went into the hat and emerged with a scrap of white paper.

McGann leaned forward to read. "Number One!" he announced.

"Great day!" yelled Mr. Sikes. "I've gone and done it!"

McGann remained after the rest of the crowd had dispersed. He sat in a far corner of the room with Bluff between his knees and watched the barkeeper polish glasses.

Mr. Sikes was jubilant; it had been a record-breaking evening, so far as drinks were concerned, and he was still grinning over his victory.

"The first thing I ever won in my life!" he said for the hundredth time. "I don't see how it happened."

"Well," said McGann, arising from his chair, "I'd better be stirrin' my stumps and go take Sam his money. I hope you'll be good to the old dog; I'll be around some time soon to see how's he's gettin' along. Better tie him up; he'll want to follow me."

A bit of clothes-line was knotted to Bluff's collar and he was tied ignominiously to the leg of a table. McGann stooped and patted his head. "Good old dog," he said, and departed.

Outside the door the Irishman lit his pipe and leaned against a lamp-post for five minutes, contemplating the stars. He then emptied his pipe, assumed an air of deep dejection, and re-entered the café.

Mr. Sikes looked up with some astonishment. Forget something?"

McGann shook his head gloomily. "No," he said. "I just couldn't do it."

"Do what?" demanded the barkeeper.

"I couldn't face those kids and tell them that I'd sold Bluff and that they'd never see him again. I've come to buy him back."

"Well, of all the—"

"Don't rub it in," said McGann, "I know I'm a softy, but the kids think the world of that dog, and it ain't treatin' 'em right. Their pa'll get the thirty-two dollars all right; I'll pay for the dog out of my own pocket. What'll you take for him?"

"I don't know that I want to sell him at all."

"Now, see here, Mr. Sikes. Those kids think the world of Bluff; they have grown up with him. You ain't going to be selfish and take him away from them, are you? You bought two chances in the raffle, so you are out two dollars; I'll give you five dollars for him and you'll make three on the deal. How about it?"

"Humph! Awhile ago you was saying that he wasn't a ten-dollar dog, and now you want me to sell him for three. I don't see it."

"This is different," argued McGann. "This is a case of charity. You know how it is with kids. I'm a poor man myself, but I'd rather go hungry than have those little fellows cry. Well, I'll give you ten dollars for him, then; that'll mean I'll have to go without my lunch for a couple of weeks, but I don't care. As man to man, now, Mr. Sikes, help me out." He peeled ten one-dollar bills from his fat roll and fluttered them enticingly before the barkeeper's doubtful eyes.

Mr. Sikes scratched his head. "As you said," he observed, "it's a question of charity."

"Think how happy they'll be when I take 'em thirty-two dollars *and* Bluff," urged McGann.

"All right," agreed Mr. Sikes gruffly, and be it said to his credit that he was really very reluctant to part with the dog.

"I like you, Sikes!" said McGann, with enthusiasm. "You've got a good heart. Here's your ten plunks. I've got to hike now, it's late."

The barkeeper moistened his thumb and counted the money. "Any time I can help you out, just let me know," he said. "Give my love to the kids!"

Bluff was untied from the table and shook himself thoroughly, to express his relief. He had been a little worried for a while, but had never quite lost faith in McGann. Evenings spent in that gentleman's company were always eventful.

After a few more words of friendly repartee, McGann once more left the café, and this time Bluff plodded at his heels. The streets were empty now, and the stoops deserted; McGann whistled as he walked, and several times he laughed out loud. He was in high spirits.

Mr. Duffy had returned and was in the act of undressing when he opened the door to the Irishman's heavy knock.

"Think I'd stolen your dog?" asked McGann.

Evidently Mr. Duffy was not in the best of humors. He dropped his shoe on the floor and muttered something unintelligible. Bluff jumped to the bed, turned around nine times, and sank into dreamless slumber.

McGann drew his roll of bills from his pocket and flourished it before his friend's astonished eyes.

"*I'm* goin' to take Mrs. Kester out to dinner; I'm goin' to take her to a two-dollar show, and then I'm goin' to take her to a cabaret!" he gloated. "There ain't nothin' mean about me!"

"Well, I'm dinged!" gasped Mr. Duffy.

"You are," agreed McGann. "And you'd be dingeder if you knew how I got the money. What's the use of workin' when the world's just full of fools itchin' to give their cash away?"

"Dry up," said Mr. Duffy, and climbed into bed. "I've been listening to Mrs. Kester talk about you all evening; now you come in and shoot off your face. Dry up and get out."

McGann dodged behind the door and escaped a well-aimed shoe. He poked his head in for a parting word.

"Good-night, Mr. E. P. Duffy," he jeered "The best thing about you is your dog. I like his name, and he's darn good company. I'll be 'round again to-morrow night to take him out for another little walk!"

John Burroughs says he has never used tobacco, tea, coffee or pepper. Well, he doesn't know what he has missed by abstaining from pepper.—*Kansas City Star.*

Some legs seem to have no self-consciousness.—*Toledo Blade.*

# THE CHINK

*By RAYMOND RICHARDS*

LO KIANG, son of Heung, bade an unemotional farewell to his wife and two-year-old son at a time when the lemon-colored fog of dawn lay on the millet fields and spread in a gaudy blanket up the slopes almost to the summit of Hangshan. He would send gold to her, he said, from the rich country to which he was going, and she, with the advice of Shan Fuh, his friend, was to make of the son a great man. Then Lo Kiang set forth, on foot, and came by evening to the home of Foo Gan, sweets tradesman of Shinchau, twenty miles to the east.

At dusk, with the squalid little town at their backs, breathlessly awaiting the coming of night, they sat cross-legged on mats before Foo Gan's hut, while far pagoda gongs throbbed through the dead air and peace lay heavily on the world. It was Foo Gan who broke the silence, looking at his guest through half-shut eyes as he drew smoke through the stem of his tiny bowled pipe.

"And when you have arrived," he asked, "what then?"

"Then," replied Lo Kiang lightly, "I will grow rich and fat so that I may come back and laugh at you."

Foo Gan smiled soberly.

"In another year but one," he said, "I shall go to Shanghai. Business prospers, and I have dealings there with Lung Tein, of the Le'i Ling shops. Presently, I, too, shall go to this white man's land, but I shall travel as a mandarin travels —in luxury."

"And I shall greet you in like style," returned Lo Kiang, a trifle nettled at the implication in the other's words. Foo Gan replenished his pipe with a pinch of shredded tobacco and began impressively:

"Five years ago Lu Keen departed Shanghai for the country to which you go now. He died at the hands of a mongrel tong in a strange city. Cuen Po started across the sea six years ago. He died of a plague on the ship. Then Ta Sien—"

Lo Kiang gestured impatiently.

"Those," he said contemptuously, "are of another caste. I am a Heung, and Heungs do not fail."

"But of your wife and son?"

Lo Kiang did not reply at once.

"The woman regrets not my going," he said finally. "I left her much cash. The boy I left with her and with Shan Fuh—my friend at Yungsui. The woman will care for him because he is her son —my friend because he is my son."

"And yet," said Foo Gan meditatively, "they speak little good of Shan Fuh."

"They lie. By the jade Buddha of Chingu he has sworn. I do not doubt."

Foo Gan deftly changed the subject, and until darkness descended the two friends talked of other things.

Refreshed by ten hours of unbroken sleep, Lo Kiang continued his journey at dawn and, traveling by river grain boat, by oxen team and on foot, came at last to the coast and finally to the hold of a tramp steamer—a berth won by a week's toil on the docks.

He spent a year at Honolulu, receiving, unconsciously, a very thin veneer of cosmopolitanism. Then opportunity offered, and as a peeler of potatoes and a washer

of dishes, he shipped on a freighter for San Francisco. Fifteen years in the United States taught Lo Kiang that the melting pot of the nations is a crucible that does not fuse the yellow man. Those fifteen years were ones of unremitting labor and sacrifice on the part of the father of the youth at Yungsui, who, rare letters from Shan Fuh stated, was even now in a fair way to pass the Chugen examinations to the third order of mandarin and would most certainly in time wear on his cap the red coral buttons of a provincial governor.

And now, at the close of the sixteenth year after his departure, Lo Kiang was an assistant cook in a dingy Chinese restaurant—a stoop-shouldered, drab-toned little Oriental, his short black hair plentifully shot with threads of gray, reasonably content with the unsatisfying content of hopelessness, finding a certain comfort in the sympathetic companionship of old Wo Lung, his employer. If at times Wo Lung expressed impatience at Lo Kiang's fixed determination to mail to China the greater part of his wages as soon as they were received, it was a kindly impatience and it always subsided at the employee's invariable response:

"I desire things for myself, of course. Above most things, I wish a business of my own. But my son is first, so that he may be a great man. Then will I work for myself."

In a few months, Lo Kiang became cook, with an assistant of his own. On the night of the first payday following his promotion, he stood in the doorway of the restaurant, fingering the three silver dollars which represented his increase in wages. In another pocket of his baggy black trousers reposed the amount of his former weekly pay. The major part of this, of course, would go to Yungsui. The three dollars represented a question involving either a visit to the gambling house of the Ten Thousand Little Monkeys or a pair of badly-needed shoes for street wear. But Lo Kiang spent little time on the streets, and in the gambling house he knew that at this moment the little fan-tan beads were dancing fascinatingly on the board.

A few moments later, he entered the grubby, low-ceilinged basement room and found a place at a corner of the finely-woven mat, with Sam Lee, the dealer, opposite, Li Chang, the laundryman, at his right, and Wong Gow, the merchant, at his left. The game began slowly.

Sam Lee spilled a handful of beads from a bowl and poised a thin ivory blade above, them, waiting for the others to stake their bets around the square, numbered card in the center. Chang placed a half-dollar on the figure 2 at his corner. Gow shoved forward a dollar until it covered the figure 3. Lo Kiang debated a moment between the 1 and the 4 and chose the former, staking a quarter. Sam Lee's blade darted into the beads, shoving four aside with each movement. Two of the players settled back to exchange disinterested remarks with the little circle of ochre-faced, black-clad spectators. The one who leaned forward with eyes intently endeavoring to count the fast-dwindling pile of counters was Lo Kiang. Sam Lee's quick blade shoved aside the last quartet of beads. An odd one remained.

"To Lo Kiang, the lucky," chanted Sam Lee, deftly scooping the beads into the bowl, flinging the winner a half-dollar and a quarter and possessing himself of the losings of Chang and Gow. On the next coup, Lo Kiang placed another quarter on the figure 4. When Sam Lee had divided the second handful of beads, no odd ones remained.

"To Lo Kiang again," intoned Sam Lee, smiling. "With the new player is the luck."

Next Lo Kiang staked a half-dollar. He won. His following bet was a dollar. He won again. Puzzled by this run of luck, he reduced his bet to a quarter, and lost. In this there was an omen,

and when the dividing blade again hung over the heap of quarters, he placed a dollar on the 3. He won. Then Lo Kiang ceased to be the man of a great vision. In him blazed up the fever of the game, driving all else from his mind as it wiped all expression from his face, steadying his fingers so there was no quiver as he placed his bets, filling his eyes with the cold, calculating light of the player who plays to win.

That night there was mild excitement in the gambling house of the Ten Thousand Little Monkeys. With interest swiftly heightening, the spectators crowded closer and closer as Lo Kiang's unheard-of good fortune leaped his winnings from five dollars to ten, from ten to twenty-five and from twenty-five to fifty, while with each play Sam Lee became more genial, his air of urbanity more pronounced.

After a straight quintet of ruinous coups, the dealer bethought himself of the gambling axiom that a change of play often works a change of luck, and brought from a shelf behind him a small saucer. He scooped a handful of counters, placed them on the mat and covered them with the saucer. "Your stake of fifty dollars, four to one, Lo Kiang," he challenged, "that you cannot guess the number remaining—one, two, three or four."

Wordlessly, Lo Kiang pushed the amount onto the mat.

"Count the beads," he said with Chinese indifference. "My choice is two."

Sam Lee's blade descended into the beads. When he had finished, two remained on the table. The banker's smile was positively a grin as he shoved toward Lo Kiang two hundred dollars in banknotes. Lo Kiang folded the bills into a compact wad and concealed them in his blouse. Wong Gow rose stiffly and stepped to the door.

"And now—" began Sam Lee.

"Hai!" cried Gow suddenly. "Police!"

With a convulsive twist of his body, Sam Lee jerked the lamp from its bracket behind him and puffed out the flame, plunging the room into total darkness. Someone flung open a trap door in the corner, admitting a gust of cool, musty air. There was a pell-mell rush toward the opening and a pell-mell tumbling down the steep stairs. Lo Kiang was the last to descend. The others already had departed the cellar. Cautiously he climbed the outside stairs and pushed up the slanting door. The alley was quiet. He emerged, lowering the door silently. Something dark took indistinct form from a dense shadow and a hand fell on his shoulder. Lo Kiang squealed in affright, and with a purely involuntary jerk of his body shook off the grasp.

"Quiet!" cautioned a low voice. "It is I—Gow."

"But the police—" quavered Lo Kiang.

A chuckle came through the dusk.

"There were no police," said Gow. "I wished you to keep what you had won, so I ended the game."

"But for what reason—"

"In my store," interrupted Gow, "is a better place to talk."

The merchant led Lo Kiang down the alley to a door set between two outjutting brick chimneys. Wong Gow turned the key and preceded the other through the opening. Inside, the merchant struck a match and applied the flame to the wick of a large and ornately flowered lamp. In the light which diffused a yellow glow over a room filled to its utmost capacity with counters, dusty showcases and high stacks of Chinese merchandise in jars and bottles and red tin boxes, Gow regarded Lo Kiang smilingly.

"You must have burned many sticks before your joss of fortune to-night, Lo Kiang," observed Gow.

Lo Kiang sank limply into a chair. The heat of the game had left him, and he was once more the meek and apologetic cook of Wo Lung's café.

"For that matter," went on Gow, "we are both fortunate. There is a certain

matter that can be discussed." He produced pipes and tobacco. "You won, I believe, two hundred dollars?"

As if for the first time realizing his luck, Lo Kiang moved his hand to his blouse front and nodded dazedly.

Gow reflectively passed a hand over his shaven poll, struggling between a racial instinct to lead up to his object by an elaborate system of digression and a desire to broach the subject at once. Finally he said:

"I will be very frank with you, Lo Kiang. It is best in matters of this kind. This—" he waved his hand to indicate the store—"is a prosperous business. For some time I have been searching for a partner with sufficient capital to enlarge it—to make it the largest store in the whole district. I believe I have found such a partner." The speaker sat back to observe the effect of his words, but found Lo Kiang's eyes directed at the floor.

Lo Kiang was silent for a long time.

"Fortune," he said finally, "is good. I have within my reach to-night the realization of a great hope. It is not for myself that I desire prosperity. There is another matter."

"Of course," said Gow, "until our customers increase in proportion to our added improvements, profits will not be large. But in six months your share should be considerably more than you earn now, Lo Kiang."

Lo Kiang was prompted to accept at once, but Chinese caution asserted itself.

"Naturally, the matter requires thought," he said, rising from his chair. "I will have an answer if you will call to-morrow. At three o'clock?"

"At three o'clock," agreed Wong Gow, well satisfied.

Lo Kiang's decision was made before he reached his cot. He would accept the offer. In it he saw, first of all, an opportunity to increase his remittances to Yungsui, and, secondly, the independence which had been his dream for years.

The cook's comparatively happy demeanor was noticed at once by Wo Lung the following morning. But, characteristically, the restaurant keeper delayed remarks until the postman lent them cause by tossing a letter through the door onto the cigar case.

"It is for you," said Wo Lung. "From Yungsui, by the Hong Kong stamp."

Lo Kiang smiled as he received the letter.

"You are happy this morning," suggested old Wo Lung.

Lo Kiang held the unopened letter in his hand while he told his employer the history of the preceding night. Sincere delight beamed from Wo Lung's eyes.

"My good wishes are with you, Lo Kiang," he said. "I shall lose a good cook, but for you I am very glad."

Lo Kiang tore open the envelope, and Wo Lung turned to arrange his stock of canned goods on the shelf behind the lunch counter.

"By the way," went on the restaurant keeper, "I expect a caller to-day—an old friend whom I knew in Shanghai ten years ago. To-night I will sit with him at dinner. And Lo Kiang, if I remember rightly, my friend prefers the liquor drained from his chow mein. In some ways he is peculiar, but he is wealthy. Some day you will be wealthy, and—"

Rambling on in this fashion, Wo Lung suddenly was startled by an exclamation —a little ejaculation laden with pain. When he turned, he beheld a Lo Kiang whose shoulders sagged again with the old air of hopelessness. Silently, Lo Kiang extended the letter. It read:

"Most Illustrious: It is my great pride to inform that your inspired son has passed the Chugen test and is now waiting tuition for the great metropolitan test which admits to the grand academy of literature and a Pekin office. I, your unworthy friend, have made arrangements for his teaching by a staff of the best educators Pekin affords. These, thieves that they are, would have me pay them one hundred and ninety-five yen.

With fear in my insignificant heart I request this enormous amount for the furtherance of your son's glorious career. Shan Fuh."

"Well?" asked Wo Lung when he had finished.

"One hundred and ninety-five yen," said Lo Kiang tonelessly, "is one hundred and ninety-five dollars.

"But you cannot intend to send that amount!"

"Yes," said Lo Kiang simply.

Wo Lung snorted. "For sixteen years," he declared fiercely, "you have sacrificed yourself to this son. It grows time that you look to your own ends.

"To me it is not a sacrifice," said Lo Kiang patiently. "When Wong Gow comes I will tell him."

Wo Lung's persuasive powers proved futile. Promptly at three o'clock Gow called.

"But this is foolish," he protested, after he had heard Lo Kiang's statement. "Within a few months you can again send money to this son—more money than ever before."

"This money is needed at once," replied the other quietly. "The tests are given but once in a long period. My thanks, Wong Gow, but I must refuse."

"You would not be that unwise," said the merchant confidently. "I will give you further time. To-morrow I shall come back."

He left Lo Kiang standing by a table, a pathetic figure of a man grown suddenly very old but, withal, a man whose final decision has been made. After a time, Lo Kiang entered the kitchen, filled a pan with potatoes and with these and a knife, seated himself on the back step in the alley. The potato peeling progressed slowly. He was not more than half through his task an hour later when he heard voices in the kitchen. Wo Lung's wealthy friend from Shanghai, he decided. Then he heard his own name, pronounced by a voice strangely familiar.

The screen creaked. Lo Kiang turned his head; the knife fell with a clatter into the pan. In the doorway stood Foo Gan, now clothed in a neat American business suit, his upper lip adorned by a thin gray mustache, a few wrinkles on his cheeks and a new portliness about his waist, but still the Foo Gan of Shinchau.

"Greetings, Lo Kiang!" said Foo Gan, after a clumsy pause.

Of the three hundred precepts of punctilio set forth in the classics for use on such occasions, Lo Kiang was at a loss to choose even one.

"I hope you have eaten well," he said at length, and became silent, his mind on the present unfulfilment of a certain boast he had made sixteen years ago in Shinchau. He strove to direct the subsequent conversation into channels that would permit of a graceful explanation, but the visitor was preparing to turn back into the restaurant before Lo Kiang remarked with careless unconcern:

"Had you delayed your visit longer, Foo Gan, I might have received you in an establishment of my own. Were it not for my son I might now entertain you as I once promised."

"No man succeeds at once," said Foo Gan courteously. "But what has your son to do with it?"

"All my earnings since I departed have gone to Yungsui," explained Lo Kiang.

Foo Gan regarded him with amazement.

"What foolishness!" he exclaimed.

"Foolishness?"

"Foolishness, certainly," declared Foo Gan. "You must know that your wife and son died in the great floods of fourteen years ago."

Lo Kiang stared, his hands fumbling nervelessly in the potato pan.

"Dead?" he heard himself say, his voice seeming to come from far distances. "Why, then—Shan Fuh—"

"Shan Fuh," said Foo Gan, "has prospered greatly. For years he has been living in luxury at Yungsui."

# WARDENS OF THE CHAPARRAL

*By ROY LYNDON SHARPE*

UG SLAUGHTER was booked again for misdemeanor. How many times his name had been entered under that category on the blotter at the central station no one in the department could have told without consulting the records. A predilection for burning liquids had marked him with a lurid bulb of a nose and drooping purple pouches beneath the eyes, and his frequent offenses against the statutes, made and provided, had fired a majority of the down-town squad with a consuming eagerness to "send him across." But invariably his trespasses had fallen just short of felony.

Slaughter was classified by the police as a mild, mournful sort of knave, who, at gaining a livelihood without severe physical endeavor, exhibited a facility that was almost the equivalent of a fine art. It had been the observation that he held two dominant aversions—unusual hazard and honest toil. Often he had been seen teetering at the vital line, to cross which he would have been yielding himself up to his traditional enemy, and always some dispensation had intervened to save him.

The chief was petulant that morning at sight of Slaughter. "Put him on the chain-gang; make him feed the concrete mixer till his tongue hangs out a foot," he decreed. "Prod him for a couple of days; after that don't watch him too closely, understand? Show the old chronic what our medicine is like; then any member of this department who prevents his escape will be given a beat so far out in the suburbs that he never will see the bright lights again."

The chief's formula attained its object, for Slaughter could not endure the blistered palms, aching spine and cramped limbs that seized him before the close of his first day with a shovel. Watching his opportunity the second day, he eluded the guard and took to the hills back of the city, where for several hours he sought comfort and concealment in the chaparral. Then spurred on by a high-grade thirst, he made his way through the undergrowth, by a devious route as remote from the public thoroughfare as the topography of region would permit, to the Arroyo Tavern, on the Temple Canyon road, where the proprietor, Shot Flattery, a companion and partner of Slaughter's former years, grudgingly granted him sanctuary.

"If you're going to put up here you'll have to bring something into camp besides a hold-over," followed Flattery's salutation. It was plain that he was slightly embarrassed. "But don't pull off anything too near here—and keep that face of gloom in the background. If it ever got out in front it would put the jinx on the dump."

Slaughter, dejected, marveled inwardly at the changes that prosperity had wrought in the manner of his old friend. Then he inventoried the tavern and its environs—a place to eat and sleep and drink; steep slopes and sharp ravines overgrown with laurel, chaparral and manzanita, where a man desiring to avoid publicity could curl himself up in complacent security and tell the law's inquisitive minions to go hang. In the absence of a more promising alternative he accepted the programme, meanwhile considering the most effective plan of pro-

cedure against the convenient flocks and gardens, a mental operation that comprehended Martin Silent's poultry plant, which he had reconnoitered subconsciously from a distance on the outward journey that day.

A few nights later, Silent was stirred by a signal of manifest distress from the direction of his poultry-houses—a high-keyed staccato medley with an accompaniment of flapping wings. In his slippers and bathrobe he sprinted along the row of enclosures until he located the point of the alarm, forced the gate, threw open the door and flashed a light. He had a glimpse of two small furry creatures that almost brushed his unclad calves as they lumbered over the sill, slid under the fence and trotted leisurely up the slope into the chaparral.

The earthen floor of the shed was littered with feathers, and four of Silent's choicest broilers lay in one corner, in their last flutter. Fresh earth from a narrow excavation under the sill of the house and a similar trench under the surrounding wire-net fence explained how the animals had entered.

"The impertinent burrowing beggars were about as large as poodles, with black-and-white stripes and bushy tails," was the description that Sam Lurch received the next day from Silent, who wore a harried air.

"Foxes, chaparral foxes," Lurch pronounced. Black with white stripes and plumy tails; usually come at night; partial to young chickens." Lurch, farm advisor for that portion of the county, was accustomed to hearing from Silent the tribulations of a man new to the problems of the poultry-raising industry, and occasionally the young expert was tempted to make entertainment of the occasion. "Good thing you didn't get rough with them, for a chaparral fox has a bad breath when he's mad or excited."

"Really? How is one to keep the blackguards away?"

"Put cans on them. No, I'm not chaffing. Open a few tomato cans, not by cutting in a circle around the top, but by gashing with a knife from the center of the top radially. Push the points of tin inward far enough to leave an opening almost large enough for the extended fingers of one hand. Bait the cans with bacon rinds and place them where the foxes come at night. They'll poke their noses in for the bacon and the sharp points will grip their necks. Naturally the harder they pull back the more firmly the points will plant themselves. Unable to see with the cans over their heads, your foxes will wander aimlessly away and get lost."

To Martin Silent, over from England less than two years, his new surroundings, and the poultry business in particular, presented many things mysterious and novel. Lurch's identification and recommendation in this emergency were no more extraordinary than they had been when the Silent fowls had shown symptoms of attacks successively by hawks, rats, bobcats, mites, roup, gapes and other units in that numerous host that preys upon the feathered family, and when later in the day he started upon his return to Temple Canyon, the poultry man had in his wagon an assorted lot of goods in tins and a can-opener. That night his lacerated fingers and a half-dozen open cans, baited and disposed about the yard, told of the diligence with which he had followed instructions, although the prowlers did not reappear that night, nor for many nights following.

"Always some ripping new pest to look out for," Silent complained to Lurch three months later, after finding where an unexpected toll had been taken from his White Leghorns. "A blooming chick appears to have more enemies than an infant, but fortunately, by this time, I know the worst of them." Which merely serves to illustrate the innocence of Mr. Silent, for Mug Slaughter, in the course of three months, had levied against the

flourishing colonies in Temple Canyon more disastrously than all the hawks, bobcats, foxes and maladies combined, yet Silent was wholly and serenly unaware of Mug Slaughter's existence.

Wild creatures of the chaparral found the heavy undergrowth, where it terminated abruptly a few yards up the slope from Silent's plant, an ideal cover from which to train longing, furtive eyes across the narrow intervening strip of meadow-land upon the tempting fryers that were taking on plumpness in the woven-wire enclosures below. Similarly, Slaughter discovered in it a mask well calculated to render his operations safe and not too arduous.

He preyed upon Silent's chickens with exceeding caution, and always with the consciousness that forcible entry of the poultry-houses constituted a felony. When Silent was away, the chickens he selected were snared by means of a wire loop and deftly removed from their enclosures.

Often the gates were opened and the chickens ran at large, feeding upon the plant and insect life. When they strayed to his side of the meadow, Slaughter was impressed by the possiblities. At last he had an inspiration—a fishing-hook and line.

He found diversion in the antics of the first chicken that gulped a hook, and under a force that it could not resist, as the line was gathered in, hand-over-hand, felt itself drawn forward with a rush, wings beating a futile protest, mandibles distended grotesquely, unable to issue an effectual outcry, and jerked at length into the concealment of the bushes.

About this performance, there was nothing to attract Silent's attention, so Slaughter was able to abstract the fowls of his choosing so adroitly that their owner did not notice their disappearance, or if he did miss them, he attributed their loss to other marauders.

From time to time, Slaughter also made incursions upon the gardens and orchards in the other direction, and always the fruits of his foraging were served up to motorists and other wayfarers who halted for refreshments at the Arroyo Tavern, whereby Shot Flattery became the chief beneficiary. The arrangement was altogether satisfactory to Slaughter, but it made Flattery uneasy to have his old associate about.

"You're making me take too many chances," he finally complained to Slaughter. "Some one will get suspicious, and my joint will be blamed for everything that has ever gone wrong out this way. Why don't you get out of the petty larceny class? Blow a safe or stick somebody up—put your time against something worth while."

"I might go over."

"That isn't what holds you back," Flattery bristled. "You'd rather crawl than work, but let me tell you something: from now on I'll not be your 'fence' for anything but the coin, and I'll give you twenty-four hours to kick in with the first instalment."

Flattery had meant to impose an insurmountable task as a means of getting rid of Slaughter, but at that instant an idea altered his plans. He adopted a conciliatory tone, at the same time producing a bottle and glasses; thus completely disarming the old inebriate, to whom resentment was an unknown and foreign quality.

"Understand how it is, Mug," Flattery purred. "If I don't keep up a certain front here, I'll lose my best trade; besides, I have a couple of partners who make me account for every two-bit piece, so you see I can't run the place the way I'd like to. But I'll tell you how we'll get around that so you can stay on here, keeping out of sight, with a good bed and plenty to eat and drink. Go after the chicken man's coin—he keeps a wad of it in his shanty." And with persuasive eloquence, Flattery outlined a campaign.

While they talked, Lorry Mills was napping at a table in an adjoining room,

with only a muslin partition intervening. An hour later he slipped out at the rear of the tavern and bent impatient steps across the hills toward the central police station in the city, where, by virtue of an inquisitive disposition and a desire to be on terms of amity with the powers, he frequently regaled the chief with bits of information about the universe.

Reluctantly the chief adopted the suggestion. "A dozen times in the last year we've been just at the point of catching Mug with the goods," he objected. "I expect he'll find an out at the last minute this time; but we'll give him another run."

That night there were unusual proceedings in the vicinity of Silent's poultry ranch. As the proprietor was eating his late evening meal, his absorption with his table fare kept him from seeing four men on horseback as they crossed the clearing a few hundred yards above the house and pushed their way into the undergrowth.

About the same time, five or six small animals, marked from their ears to the tips of their broad tails with parallel bars of black and white, were poking curious noses out of the chaparral, their nostrils contracting and dilating busily under jet beads of eyes. They were in quest of supper, and had picked up the scent of live poultry. When Silent later stepped out in the gathering dusk to close and fasten the chicken-house doors for the night, he discovered one of the animals, which had ventured almost up to one of the sheds and was scampering back. The discovery prompted the poultry man to look about for the cans which he had prepared months before; also to readjust their points and apply fresh bait.

As darkness settled, Mug Slaughter at the Arroyo Tavern bar was shuddering and displaying symptons of a failing resolution. "This is going to be poor business, breaking into a man's house and robbing him at night; besides, I can't very well do a trick of this kind by myself," he deprecated. And he conjured a score of other arguments against the enterprise, which Flattery answered with more drinks, cajolery, praise, denunciation, and at last a threat of bodily violence.

"Let me put it off till to-morrow night, when I'm sober," Slaughter pleaded.

"You're never sober. You'll get busy to-night. Get his coin. Don't do anything worse than that unless you have to, but if he wakes up mean and starts anything you know what to do."

"Shot, you come along. I'll do the work, but I want you with me."

"And leave this place alone? What are you talking about! Say, if there's any more debate about this, I'm going to have you out of here on your neck."

Adequately subdued, Slaughter reeled out of the barroom and started for the Silent domicile, taking his position by the sentinel eucalyptus trees against the sky and groping mechanically for the somber trial. As he stumbled along, his eyes more and more adapting themselves to the meager light and making out objects about him, he gained courage. His senses were swimming in an alcoholic fog that blinded him to everything but the task ahead.

Disregarding all the rules of prudence, Slaughter emerged noisily from the underbrush directly back of Silent's poultry enclosure, pausing at the edge of the clearing only long enough to tie a handkerchief about the lower part of his face and to observe that there was no light in the bungalow. He halted again at one of the poultry-houses and rocked for a brief interval in its shadow. An open space lay between him and the bungalow. At one hand stood Silent's wagon, near a corral where horses were munching hay. Reassured, he careened across the yard to the house, fumbled at a window, found the sash up, the opening screened.

He meditated briefly. In his pocket was a short, blunt instrument with which he could force any ordinary window or door; also with a knife-blade he could

easily cleave his way through the screen, but instinctively, and in spite of his whiskey, he considered the danger of exposing himself before a window. A door would be preferable.

Turning the corner, he lurched aside unsteadily, startled by the scraping sound of metal against the earth. In the darkness he could dimly make out the movement of a small, shadowy object that was executing odd figures about the yard, so near his feet that Slaughter had come within a few inches of treading it down. As he hesitated, a similar rattle of metal reached him from another direction He peered about uneasily. Twenty or thirty feet farther out in the yard, more plainly to be seen, another creature was moving. An instant later, he discovered a third. He swung about and faced a fourth by the side of the house, near where he had passed. They were on all sides of him; all of them going through fantastic evolutions, changing directions abruptly or wheeling in narrow circles, plunging their noses into the turf with a metallic click at each movement.

Slaughter swayed in his tracks. To his excited vision, the yard was alive with black-and-white creatures. One of them charged him. He kicked out at it desperately. His toe came in clattering contact with a quart-size fruit-can with a driving force that sent the creature spinning like a black-and-white pin-wheel. Instantly the atmosphere was charged with a pestilential effluvium, soul-searching in its penetration, staggering in its offensive potency.

"Wow-hoo!" Slaughter started a succession of shrill echoes. Gasping, flinging his arms before him, he bounded through the riot of evil fumes to the wagon, and skidded over the side, grovelling in the bottom on his stomach.

Hatless, the handkerchief that had been intended for a disguise stripped away and hanging about his throat, blinking violently, his face distorted and working with terror, he was on his knees, clutching the seat of the vehicle, when four men slipped out of the undergrowth and closed in upon him, two of them flashing pocket lamps as they ran.

"What's all this bally noise?" Martin Silent in pajamas emerged from the bungalow and shuffled across the yard.

"S-s-skunks! Hu-hu-hundreds of s-s-skunks! Di-di-digging with ti-tin-horns!" Slaughter chattered. Delirium tremens was gripping him and his voice broke to a piercing falsetto.

"Stop that yap and come out of there." A man in a drab suit was climbing into the wagon. In the flash of a pocket-lamp, Slaughter beheld the chief reaching for him. He straightened himself up with a sudden movement that projected him out of his retreat. He struck across the wagon-tongue, caught one toe in the whiffletrees, the other on the neckyoke, and continued his flight on all fours until he could gather himself.

"Let him go," chanted the chief, as two of the men moved to head him off. And Slaughter rounded the poultry-sheds at prodigious strides, crashing into the chaparral a moment later.

"I say," Martin Silent began, "we have the beggars canned sure enough."

"What do you mean, canned?" some one asked.

"Don't you see? They tried for the bait, and they can't disengage the cans."

"It's plain you're not aware of all that's been going on around here tonight," a man in drab growled.

The chief was clinging at a discreet elevation to the side of the wagon, one foot on the brake-beam, grimly observing the diminutive, eery figures of black and white as they waltzed and capered. For an instant he glared ominously across the wagon at Lorry Mills.

"Come to think of it, you haven't the head to frame up a thing of this sort. I guess my original surmise holds good—the devil's wardens are still on watch over that old pirate, even out here in the chaparral."

# MEOWS FROM THE MOVIES

*By ALICE GLENISTER*

Can you imagine a more exquisite combination of colors than pink, white and gold? Then you cannot imagine anyone more exquisite than Marion Davies. Her gaze is so contemplative in repose, we often wonder what her thoughts are.

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Miss Davies has finished "The Restless Sex," by Robert W. Chambers, and has begun work on her next release, "Buried Treasure," by E. Britten Austin.

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In positive contrast to everything easy to gaze upon, issued for our amusement, are the pictures that have come out of the West through Universal; we'll admit, however, they have somewhat redeemed themselves through Priscilla Dean and her "Virgin of Stamboul" —and that has many flaws.

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Do the Pioneer Film people imagine they can "put one over" on the public with their belated issue of Sheldon Lewis in the role of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"? Even the great Mansfield, at his best, never reached the John Barrymore achievement.

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If prohibition didn't have us by the tail there would doubtless ensue a new cocktail or an old one by a new name, since the issue of Barrymore's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." "The Hyde Cocktail," the one he concocts as his transformation vehicle, looks good, but isn't; it's a blending of buttermilk and coffee.

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"How to Become a Star in Two Laps" would be a good title for advice to feminine screen aspirants. First lap—play opposite star in slap-stick comedies. Second lap—play underworld parts in feature pictures. Stardom awaits you. Ask Bebe Daniels; she is the latest star to be announced by the publicity department of Famous Players.

At this writing, Pearl White, Fox star, has just sailed for a tour of Europe. Her last words must have been, "Ain't it a grand and glorious feelin', after all these yeahs and yeahs of screen acting, to run away and play on the other side of the world?"

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One of the best stories in the Satevepost last year was "The Dancin' Fool," by Henry Payson Dowst. One of the best actors on the screen will enact the role of Sylvester Tibble, viz., Wallace Reid. Bebe Daniels plays an excellent opposite.

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The beauty of Mrs. Sidney Drew was never more poignant than at the present time. Not only is she lovely in appearance, but is exceedingly clever; she can write, direct and act, dress with exquisite taste and entertain, all with equal efficiency. She is now acting in two-reel comedies for Pathe.

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Those clever comedians of erstwhile two-reel comedy fame, Lyons and Moran, will next be seen in a screen version of "La, La, Lucile." It is rollicking and entertaining, with a tempo that keeps things going like jazz music at a ball.

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Mildred Harris Chaplin has about completed "Harriet and the Piper," by Kathleen Norris. We have read this interesting story, and believe that it is admirably suited to the talents and good looks of Louis Mayer's star.

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Wanda Hawley is a sweet and pleasing player girl, and we like her work opposite such stars as Wallace Reid and Bryant Washburn; but just how Realart came to the conclusion that Wanda is the stuff of which stars are made, we are at a loss to understand. However, far be it from us to predict; on the contrary, we hope Wanda does get over.

We wonder if you have noticed the excellent work of Gibson Gowland? Especially in "Blind Husbands" and in Anita Stewart's "The Fighting Shepherdess." In the first-named, his work is the best part of the picture.

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Dustin Farnum will again portray a dual role in his new picture, "Big Happiness." This is a story of two brothers of opposite characteristics; the locale is France and the author is "Pan," a writer of high repute in England. The story is full of excellent plot and action, and "Dusty" Farnum is ideal for the part.

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One of the greatest productions issued by William Fox this year is Gladys Brockwell's picture, "The Mother of His Children." Miss Brockwell is at her best, and the play is one of great power and dramatic quality.

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Another big Broadway production has been packed up and sent to the Coast for screen production. It is "So Long, Letty," and the Christies, Al and Charles, are the producers.

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Shirley Mason, Fox star, has organized a tennis club, exclusively for screen players. The charter members are Bert Lytell, Alice Lake, Viola Dana, Anna Q. Nilsson, Buster Keaton and Rosemary Theby. Headquarters are located near the Fox studio.

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Ever notice how very thin Gloria Hope is? You can, if you haven't, in Tom Moore's "A Desperate Hero." She wants to raise her weight over the hundred mark. To that end, she tells us, she drinks fifteen glasses of malted milk a day.

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Edith Hallor, another recruit from slapstick, prefers to remain behind the camera, in spite of a very tempting offer to appear in a stage version of "The Beautiful Virgin." At present, she is in "Just Outside the Door," produced by Selznick. What did we tell you about these comedy girls?

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ZaZu Pitts, the girl with the ginger-cake, peach-stone name, certainly has had a phenomenal rise to stardom; from extra girl to star of Brentwood Productions in one short year. Not on the strength of her great beauty or "pull," but through sheer ability and hard work. Her forthcoming Brentwood pictures, under the direction of Henry Kolker, are: "Bright Skies," "The Heart of Twenty," and "The Little Widow."

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Carmel Myers, who has been playing in a Broadway musical comedy, "The Magic Melody," is to return to the screen. Universal will present her in "Crook" society dramas. We are asking, "What do they mean by 'crook' and 'society'?"

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Leatrice Joy, George Loane Tucker's new star, writes us that she most emphatically wishes that editors, printers and proofreaders would learn that her name begins with "L" and not "B." Not answering to any of the aforementioned, and not having spelled her name wrong, we fail to see why Leatrice is peeved at us.

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Thomas Meighan—or "Tommy," as he is called by his loving friends—Kathlyn Williams and Margaret Loomis have prominent roles in William De Mille's star production, "Conrad in Quest of His Youth." Tommie remains unspoiled in spite of his success, which keeps us his "loving friend."

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Charles Ray's "Forty-five Minutes from Broadway," the George M. Cohan play, is immense. We have no words handy to express our appreciation of its merits. With him are Ann May, Harry Myers, and Lydia Knott, of the well-known.

George Bernard Shaw refuses to sell the movie rights to his plays for a million dollars. Our idea of a movie version of a Shaw play is a motion picture in which nothing moves but the mouths of the actors.—*Cleveland Plain Dealer.*

# $5,000.00
# IN CASH PRIZES
## for Original Short Stories of Present-Day Life for Publication in
# The Black Cat

### The Prizes Are:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st Prize | - - - - - - - | $2,000 |
| 2nd " | - - - - - - - | 1,200 |
| 3rd " | - - - - - - - | 700 |
| 4th " | - - - - - - - | 500 |
| 5th " | - - - - - - - | 300 |
| 6th " | - - - - - - - | 200 |
| 7th " | - - - - - - - | 100 |

THE prize winning stories will be stories of plot, of action, of interesting complication —stories that are meaty and fast-moving, yet both real and reasonable. Spend the sweat of your brow on deeds, not on acute character analysis; on big situations, on suspense and appeal, not on tedious description and fine writing.

The check pulling stories will be the stories of BIG IDEAS, LOGICALLY and POWERFULLY developed.

Write about present-day life, and avoid the morbid, gruesome, supernatural and unpleasantly tragic. No dialect stories will be considered.

## *Conditions*

1. Each manuscript must bear at the top of the first page the writer's real name and address, in full; also the number of words in the story, which may range from 1,500 to 6,000. Do not exceed the latter number.

2. Each manuscript must be typewritten on standard size paper (8½ x 11 inches); must be sent flat or folded, but ***not rolled,*** postage or express charges fully prepaid, and accompanied by stamped addressed envelope for return. Letters concerning stories submitted must be enclosed with manuscripts—not sent under separate cover. Manuscripts will be received and returned only at the writer's risk.

3. Every manuscript will be judged purely on story-value, on its interest in plot and action;

and the name or reputation of a writer will carry no weight whatsoever.

4. All envelopes containing manuscripts should be plainly marked "Prize Contest" and addressed "The Black Cat Magazine, Inc., 229 West 28th St., New York, N. Y." Their receipt will be acknowledged. Any competitor may send as many stories as he pleases, but in each case he must comply with all the above conditions.

5. Failure of any manuscript to fulfill all the above requirements will automatically eliminate it.

6. The competition will close June 30, 1920, and within sixty days of that date the awards will be announced in THE BLACK CAT and paid in cash. All stories submitted in the competition that are found to be acceptable for publication in THE BLACK CAT will be paid for at regular rates. Publication of these stories will begin as soon as possible, and all stories thus accepted will be published with the statement "Entered in THE BLACK CAT Prize Story Con-

test." Prizes will be in addition to the regular rates. The publishers make this provision for payment at regular rates and early publication of prize entries because they recognize the fact that many writers do not wish to tie up marketable material for the long period required to make the awards. Decisions will be made as promptly as possible and all unacceptable manuscripts returned. All manuscripts received in envelopes postmarked later than June 30th, 1920, will be considered for publication, but will not be received as entries in the Prize Contest.

All conditions and requirements being here fully set forth, the editors cannot undertake to enter into correspondence relative thereto.

# The Black Cat

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